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ROBIN HOOD.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Robin Hood:

A

COLLECTION

OF ALL THE ANCIENT

POEMS, SONGS, AND BALLADS,

NOW EXTANT

RELATIVE TO THAT CELEBRATED

English Outlaw.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

HISTORICAL ANECDOTES OF HIS LIFE.

BY JOSEPH RITSON, Esq.

VOL. I.

Dum juga montis aper, fluvios dum piscis amabit,
Dumque thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadæ;
Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.

VIRG.

Second Edition.

LONDON:

WILLIAM PICKERING:

J. AND G. TODD, YORK.

1832.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE former edition of ROBIN HOOD was published by Mr. Ritson in 1795, who continued from time to time to make additions to his own copy, from which the present edition has been carefully printed.

The original engravings, by the celebrated Bewick, have been again used; and from the improved art of wood-cut-printing, will be found superior in clearness and beauty to the first impression.

The tale of "Robin Hood and the Monk," of which the existence was unknown to Mr. Ritson, though he has anxiously preserved a small fragment of it (I. lxxxv), is now added to the "Appendix."

Stockton-upon-Tees,
12th June, 1832.

PREFACE.

THE singular circumstance, that the name of an outlawed individual of the twelfth or thirteenth century should continue traditionally popular, be chanted in ballads, and, as one may say,

Familiar in our mouth as household words,

at the end of the eighteenth, excited the editors curiosity to retrieve all the historical or poetical remains concerning him that could be met with: an object which he has occasionally pursued for many years; and of which pursuit he now publishes the result. He cannot, indeed, pretend that his researches, extensive as they must appear, have been attended with all the success he could have wished; but, at the same time, it ought to be acknowledged that many poetical pieces, of great antiquity and some merit, are deservedly rescued from oblivion.

The materials collected for "the life" of this celebrated character, which are either preserved

at large, or carefully referred to, in the "notes and illustrations," are not, it must be confessed, in every instance, so important, so ancient, or, perhaps, so authentic, as the subject seems to demand; although the compiler may be permitted to say, in humble second-hand imitation of the poet Martial:

> Some there are good, some middling, and some bad;
> But yet they were the best that could be had.

Desirous to omit nothing that he could find upon the subject, he has everywhere faithfully vouched and exhibited his authorities, such as they are: it would, therefore, seem altogether uncandid or unjust to make him responsible for the want of authenticity of such of them as may appear liable to that imputation.

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On a Robin Hood of 1296, 1332, 1354, see the T.L.S., April 7, May 26, 1927.

THE

LIFE OF ROBIN HOOD.

It will scarcely be expected that one should be able to offer an authentic narrative of the life and transactions of this extraordinary personage. The times in which he lived, the mode of life he adopted, and the silence or loss of contemporary writers, are circumstances sufficiently favourable, indeed, to romance, but altogether inimical to historical truth. The reader must, therefore, be contented with such a detail, however scanty or imperfect, as a zealous pursuit of the subject enables one to give; and which, though it may fail to satisfy, may possibly serve to amuse.

No assistance has been derived from the labours of his professed biographers (a); and even the industrious sir John Hawkins, from whom the public might have expected ample gratification upon the subject, acknowledges that "the history of this popular hero is but little known, and all the scattered fragments concerning him, could they be brought together, would fall far short of satisfying such an

enquirer as none but real and authenticated facts will content. We must," he says, "take his story as we find it." He accordingly gives us nothing but two or three trite and trivial extracts, with which every one, at all curious about the subject, was as well acquainted as himself. It is not, at the same time, pretended, that the present attempt promises more than to bring together the scattered fragments to which the learned historian alludes. This, however, has been done, according to the best of the compilers information and abilities; and the result is, with a due sense of the deficiency of both, submitted to the readers candour.

ROBIN HOOD was born at Locksley, in the county of Nottingham, (A) in the reign of king Henry the second, and about the year of Christ 1160 (B). His extraction was noble, and his true name ROBERT FITZOOTH, which vulgar pronunciation easily corrupted into ROBIN HOOD (C). He is frequently stiled, and commonly reputed to have been EARL OF HUNTINGDON; a title to which, in the latter part of his life, at least, he actually appears to have had some sort of pretension (D). In his youth he is reported to have been of a wild and extravagant disposition; insomuch that, his inheritance being consumed or forfeited by his excesses, and his person outlawed for debt, either from necessity or choice, he sought an asylum in the woods and forests, with

which immense tracts, especially in the northern parts of the kingdom, were at that time covered (E). Of these he chiefly affected Barnsdale, in Yorkshire, Sherwood, in Nottinghamshire, and, according to some, Plompton-park, in Cumberland (F). Here he either found, or was afterward joined by, a number of persons in similar circumstances;

> "Such as the fury of ungovern'd youth
> Thrust from the company of awful men:" (*F)

who appear to have considered and obeyed him as their chief or leader, and of whom his principal favourites, or those in whose courage and fidelity he most confided, were Little John, (whose surname is said to have been Nailor,) William Scadlock (Scathelock or Scarlet), George a Green, pinder (or pound-keeper) of Wakefield, Much, a millers son, and a certain monk or frier named Tuck (G). He is likewise said to have been accompanied in his retreat by a female, of whom he was enamoured, and whose real or adopted name was Marian (H).

His company, in process of time, consisted of a hundred archers; men, says Major, most skilful in battle, whom four times that number of the boldest fellows durst not attack (I). His manner of recruiting was somewhat singular; for, in the words of an old writer, "whersoever he hard of any that were of unusual strength and 'hardines,' he would desgyse himselfe, and, rather then fayle, go lyke a begger to

become acquaynted with them; and, after he had tryed them with fyghting; never give them over tyl he had used means to drawe [them] to lyve after his fashion" (J): a practice of which numerous instances are recorded in the more common and popular songs, where, indeed, he seldom fails to receive a sound beating. In shooting with the long bow, which they chiefly practised, "they excelled all the men of the land; though, as occasion required, they had also other weapons" (K).

In these forests, and with this company, he for many years reigned like an independant sovereign; at perpetual war, indeed, with the king of England, and all his subjects, with an exception, however, of the poor and needy, and such as were "desolate and oppressed," or stood in need of his protection. When molested, by a superior force, in one place, he retired to another, still defying the power of what was called law and government, and making his enemies pay dearly, as well for their open attacks, as for their clandestine treachery. It is not, at the same time, to be concluded that he must, in this opposition, have been guilty of manifest treason or rebellion; as he most certainly can be justly charged with neither. An outlaw, in those times, being deprived of protection, owed no allegiance: "his hand 'was' against every man, and every mans hand against him" (L). These forests, in short, were his territories; those who accompanied and adhered to him his subjects:

The world was not his friend, nor the worlds law:

and what better title king Richard could pretend to the territory and people of England than Robin Hood had to the dominion of Barnsdale or Sherwood is a question humbly submitted to the consideration of the political philosopher.

The deer with which the royal forests then abounded (every Norman tyrant being, like Nimrod, "a mighty hunter before the lord") would afford our hero and his companions an ample supply of food throughout the year; and of fuel, for dressing their venison, or for the other purposes of life, they could evidently be in no want. The rest of their necessaries would be easily procured, partly by taking what they had occasion for from the wealthy passenger, who traversed or approached their territories, and partly by commerce with the neighbouring villages or great towns.

It may be readily imagined that such a life, during great part of the year, at least, and while it continued free from the alarms or apprehensions to which our foresters, one would suppose, must have been too frequently subject, might be sufficiently pleasant and desirable, and even deserve the compliment which is paid to it by Shakespeare, in his comedy of *As you like it*, (Act I. scene I.) where, on Olivers asking, "where will the old duke live?" Charles answers, "They say he is already in the forest of

Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the OLD ROBIN HOOD OF ENGLAND; . . . and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world." Their gallant chief, indeed, may be presumed to have frequently exclaimed with the banished Valentine, in another play of the same author:*

> "How use doth breed a habit in a man!
> This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
> I better brook than flourishing peopled towns:
> Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,
> And, to the nightingales complaining notes,
> Tune my distresses, and record my woes."

He would, doubtless, too often find occasion to add:

> "What hallooing and what stir is this to-day?
> These are my mates, that make their wills their law,
> Have some unhappy passenger in chace:
> They love me well; yet I have much to do,
> To keep them from uncivil outrages."

But, on the other hand, it will be at once difficult and painful to conceive,

> ———When they did hear
> The rain and wind beat dark December, how,
> In that their pinching cave, they could discourse
> The freezing hours away! (M)

Their mode of life, in short, and domestic œconomy, of which no authentic particulars have been even

* Two Gentlemen of Verona, act 5. scene 4.

traditionally preserved, are more easily to be guessed at than described. They have, nevertheless, been elegantly sketched by the animating pencil of an excellent, though neglected poet.

" The merry pranks he play'd, would ask an age to tell,
And the adventures strange that Robin Hood befell,
When Mansfield many a time for Robin hath been laid,
How he hath cousen'd them, that him would have betray'd;
How often he hath come to Nottingham disguis'd,
And cunningly escap'd, being set to be surpriz'd.
In this our spacious isle, I think there is not one,
But he hath heard some talk of him and little John;
And to the end of time, the tales shall ne'er be done,
Of Scarlock, George a Green, and Much the miller's son,
Of Tuck the merry friar, which many a sermon made
In praise of Robin Hood, his out-laws, and their trade.
An hundred valiant men had this brave Robin Hood,
Still ready at his call, that bow-men were right good,
All clad in Lincoln green, (N) with caps of red and blue,
His fellow's winded horn not one of them but knew,
When setting to their lips their little beugles shrill,
The warbling ecchos wak'd from every dale and hill.
Their bauldricks set with studs, athwart their shoulders cast,
To which under their arms their sheafs were buckled fast,
A short sword at their belt, a buckler scarce a span,
Who struck below the knee, not counted then a man:
All made of Spanish yew, their bows were wondrous strong;
They not an arrow drew, but was a cloth-yard long.
Of archery they had the very perfect craft,
With broad-arrow, or but, or prick, or roving shaft,
At marks full forty score, they us'd to prick, and rove,
Yet higher than the breast, for compass never strove;
Yet at the farthest mark a foot could hardly win:

At long-outs, short, and hoyles, each one could cleave the pin:
Their arrows finely pair'd, for timber, and for feather,
With birch and brazil piec'd to fly in any weather;
And shot they with the round, the square, or forked pile,
The loose gave such a twang, as might be heard a mile.
And of these archers brave, there was not any one,
But he could kill a deer his swiftest speed upon,
Which they did boil and roast, in many a mighty wood,
Sharp hunger the fine sauce to their more kingly food.
Then taking them to rest, his merry men and he
Slept many a summer's night under the greenwood tree.
From wealthy abbots chests, and churls abundant store,
What oftentimes he took, he shar'd amongst the poor:
No lordly bishop came in lusty Robin's way,
To him before he went, but for his pass must pay:
The widow in distress he graciously reliev'd,
And remedied the wrongs of many a virgin griev'd: (O)
He from the husband's bed no married woman wan,
But to his mistress dear, his loved Marian,
Was ever constant known, which wheresoe'er she came,
Was sovereign of the woods; chief lady of the game:
Her clothes tuck'd to the knee, and dainty braided hair,
With bow and quiver arm'd, she wander'd here and there,
Amongst the forests wild; Diana never knew
Such pleasures, nor such harts as Mariana slew."*

That our hero and his companions, while they lived in the woods, had recourse to robbery for their better support is neither to be concealed nor to be denied. Testimonies to this purpose, indeed, would be equally endless and unnecessary. Fordun, in the fourteenth century, calls him, "*ille famosissimus siccarius*," that most celebrated robber, and Major

* Drayton's Polyolbion, song xxvi.

terms him and Little John, "*famatissimi latrones.*" But it is to be remembered, according to the confession of the latter historian, that, in these exertions of power, he took away the goods of rich men only; never killing any person, unless he was attacked or resisted: that he would not suffer a woman to be maltreated; nor ever took any thing from the poor, but charitably fed them with the wealth he drew from the abbots. I disapprove, says he, of the rapine of the man: but he was the most humane and the prince of all robbers (* O). In allusion, no doubt, to this irregular and predatory course of life, he has had the honour to be compared to the illustrious Wallace, the champion and deliverer of his country; and that, it is not a little remarkable, in the latters own time (P).

Our hero, indeed, seems to have held bishops, abbots, priests, and monks, in a word, all the clergy, regular or secular, in decided aversion.

> "These byshoppes and thyse archebyshoppes,
> Ye shall them bete and bynde,"

was an injunction carefully impressed upon his followers. The abbot of Saint Marys, in York, (Q) from some unknown cause, appears to have been distinguished by particular animosity; and the sheriff of Nottinghamshire, (R) who may have been too active and officious in his endeavours to apprehend him, was the unremitted object of his vengeance.

Notwithstanding, however, the aversion in which

he appears to have held the clergy of every denomination, he was a man of exemplary piety, according to the notions of that age, and retained a domestic chaplain (frier Tuck no doubt) for the diurnal celebration of the divine mysteries. This we learn from an anecdote preserved by Fordun, (S) as an instance of those actions which the historian allows to deserve commendation. One day, as he heard mass, which he was most devoutly accustomed to do, (nor would he, in whatever necessity, suffer the office to be interrupted,) he was espied by a certain sheriff and officers belonging to the king, who had frequently before molested him, in that most secret recess of the wood where he was at mass. Some of his people, who perceived what was going forward, advised him to fly with all speed, which, out of reverence to the sacrament, which he was then most devoutly worshiping, he absolutely refused to do. But the rest of his men having fled for fear of death, Robin, confiding solely in him whom he reverently worshiped, with a very few, who by chance were present, set upon his enemies, whom he easily vanquished; and, being enriched with their spoils and ransom, he always held the ministers of the church and masses in greater veneration ever after, mindful of what is vulgarly said:

Him god does surely hear
Who oft to th' mass gives ear.

Having, for a long series of years, maintained a

sort of independent sovereignty, and set kings, judges, and magistrates at defiance, a proclamation was published, (T) offering a considerable reward for bringing him in either dead or alive; which, however, seems to have been productive of no greater success than former attempts for that purpose. At length, the infirmities of old age increasing upon him, (U) and desirous to be relieved, in a fit of sickness, by being let blood, he applied for that purpose to the prioress of Kirkleys-nunnery in Yorkshire, his relation, (women, and particularly religious women, being, in those times, somewhat better skilled in surgery than the sex is at present,) by whom he was treacherously suffered to bleed to death. This event happened on the 18th of November, 1247, being the 31st year of king Henry III. and (if the date assigned to his birth be correct) about the 87th of his age (U). He was interred under some trees, at a short distance from the house; a stone being placed over his grave, with an inscription to his memory (V).

Such was the end of Robin Hood: a man who, in a barbarous age, and under a complicated tyranny, displayed a spirit of freedom and independence, which has endeared him to the common people, whose cause he maintained, (for all opposition to tyranny is the cause of the people,) and, in spite of the malicious endeavours of pitiful monks, by whom history was consecrated to the crimes and follies of titled ruffians and sainted idiots, to suppress all

record of his patriotic exertions and virtuous acts, will render his name immortal.

With respect to his personal character: it is sufficiently evident that he was active, brave, prudent, patient; possessed of uncommon bodily strength, and considerable military skill; just, generous, benevolent, faithful, and beloved or revered by his followers or adherents for his excellent and amiable qualities. Fordun, a priest, extols his piety, Major (as we have seen) pronounces him the most humane and the prince of all robbers; and Camden, whose testimony is of some weight, calls him "*prædonem mitissimum*," the gentlest of thieves. As proofs of his universal and singular popularity: his story and exploits have been made the subject as well of various dramatic exibitions (W), as of innumerable poems, rimes, songs and ballads (X): he has given rise to divers proverbs (Y); and to swear by him, or some of his companions, appears to have been a usual practice (Z): his songs have been chanted on the most solemn occasions (AA); his service sometimes preferred to the word of god (BB): he may be regarded as the patron of archery (CC): and, though not actually canonized, (a situation to which the miracles wrought in his favour, as well in his lifetime as after his death, and the supernatural powers he is, in some parts, supposed to have possessed (DD), give him an indisputable claim,) he obtained the principal distinction of sainthood, in having a festival allotted to

him, and solemn games instituted in honour of his memory, which were celebrated till the latter end of the sixteenth century; not by the populace only, but by kings or princes and grave magistrates; and that as well in Scotland as in England; being considered, in the former country, of the highest political importance, and essential to the civil and religious liberties of the people, the efforts of government to suppress them frequently producing tumult and insurrection (EE): his bow, and one of his arrows, his chair, his cap, and one of his slippers, were preserved, with peculiar veneration, till within the present century (FF); and not only places which afforded him security or amusement, but even the well at which he quenched his thirst, still retain his name (GG): a name which, in the middle of the present century, was conferred as a singular distinction upon the prime minister to the king of Madagascar (HH).

After his death his company was dispersed. History is silent in particulars: all that we can, therefore, learn is, that the honour of Little Johns death and burial is contended for by rival nations (II); that his grave continued long "celebrous for the yielding of excellent whetstones;" and that some of his descendants, of the name of Nailor, which he himself bore, and they from him, were in being so late as the last century (KK).

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING LIFE.

(a) "FORMER biographers," &c.] Such, that is, as have already appeared in print, since a sort of manuscript life in the Sloane Library will appear to have been of some service. The first of these respectable personages is the author, or rather compiler, of "The noble birth and gallant atchievements of that remarkable outlaw Robin Hood; together with a true account, of the many merry extravagant exploits he played; in twelve several stories: newly collected by an ingenious antiquary. London, printed by W. O." [William Onley.] 4to. black letter, no date. These "several stories," in fact, are only so many of the songs in the common Garland transposed; and the "ingenious antiquary," who strung them together, has known so little of his trade, that he sets out with informing us of his heros banishment by king Henry the eighth. The above is supposed to be the "small merry book" called Robin Hood, mentioned in a list of "books, ballads, and histories, printed for and sold by William Thackeray at the Angel in Duck-lane," (about 1680,) preserved in one of the volumes of old ballads (part of Bagfords collection) in the British Museum.

Another piece of biography, from which much will not be expected, is, "The lives and heroick atchievements of the renowned Robin Hood, and James Hind, two noted robbers and highwaymen. London, 1752." 8vo. This, however, is probably nothing more than an extract from Johnsons

" Lives of the highwaymen," in which, as a specimen of the authors historical authenticity, we have the life and actions of that noted robber, sir John Falstaff.

The principal if not sole reason why our hero is never once mentioned by Matthew Paris, Benedictus Abbas, or any other ancient English historian, was most probably his avowed enmity to churchmen; and history, in former times, was written by none but monks. They were unwilling to praise the actions which they durst neither misrepresent nor deny. Fordun and Major, however, being foreigners, have not been deterred by this professional spirit from rendering homage to his virtues.

(A) "—was born at Locksley in the county of Nottingham."] " Robin hood," says a MS. in the British Museum, (Bib. Sloan. 715.) written, as it seems, toward the end of the sixteenth century, " was borne at Lockesley in Yorkshyre, or after others in Nottinghamshire." The writer here labours under manifest ignorance and confusion, but the first row of the rubric will set him right:

> " In Locksly town, in merry Nottinghamshire,
> In merry sweet Locksly town,
> There bold Robin Hood was born and was bred,
> Bold Robin of famous renown."*

Dr. Fuller (Worthies of England, 1662, p. 320.) is doubtful as to the place of his nativity. Speaking of the " Memorable Persons" of Nottinghamshire, " Robert Hood," says he, " (if not by birth) by his chief abode this country-man."

The name of such a town as Locksley, or Loxley (for so, we sometimes find it spelled), in the county of Nottingham or of York, does not, it must be confessed, occur either in sir Henry Spelmans Villare Anglicum, in Adams's Index

* See Part II. Ballad 1.

villaris, in Whatleys Englands Gazetteer,* in Thorotons History of Nottinghamshire, or in the Nomina villarum Eboracensium (York, 1768, 8vo). The silence of these authorities is not, however, to be regarded as a conclusive proof that such a place never existed. The names of towns and villages, of which no trace is now to be found but in ancient writings, would fill a volume.

(B)—" in the reign of king Henry the second, and about the year of Christ 1160.] " Robin Hood," according to the Sloane MS. " was borne . . . in the dayes of Henry the 2nd about the yeare 1160." This was the 6th year of that monarch; at whose death (anno 1189) he would, of course, be about 29 years of age. Those writers are therefore pretty correct who represent him as playing his pranks (Dr. Fullers phrase) in the reign of king Richard the first, and, according to the last-named author, " about the year of our lord 1200."† Thus Mair (who is followed by Stowe, Annales 1592, p. 227.) " Circa hæc tempora [sci. Ricardi I.] ut auguror," &c. A MS. note in the museum (Bib. Har. 1233.) not, in Mr. Wanleys opinion, to be relyed on, places him in the same period, " Temp. Rich. I." Nor is Fordun altogether out of his reckoning in bringing him down to the time of Henry III. as we shall hereafter see; and with him agrees Andrew of Wyntowne, in his " Oryginale cronykil," written about 1420, which, at the year 1283, has the following lines:

" Lytil Jhon and Robyne Hude
Wayth-men were commendyd gud:
In Yngil-wode and Barnysdale
Thai oysyd all this tyme thare trawale."

* All three mention a Loxley in Warwickshire, and another in Staffordshire (" near Needwood-forest; the manor and seat of the Kinardsleys.")

† It is 1100 in the original, but that is clearly an error of the press.

A modern writer, (History of Whitby, by Lionel Charlton, York, 1779, 4to.) though of no authority in this point, has done well enough to speak of him as living "in the days of abbot Richard and Peter his successor;" that is, between the years 1176 and 1211. The author of the two plays upon the story of our hero, of which a particular account will be hereafter given, makes him contemporary with king Richard, who, as well as his brother prince John, is introduced upon the scene; which is confirmed by another play, quoted in note (D). Warner, also, in his Albions England, 1602. p. 132. refers his existence to "better daies, first Richards daies." This, to be sure, may not be such evidence as would be sufficient to decide the point in a court of justice; but neither judge nor counsel will dispute the authority of that oracle of the law sir Edward Coke, who pronounces that "This Robert Hood lived in the reign of king R. I." (3 Institute, 197.)

We must not therefore regard what is said by such writers as the author of "George a Greene, the pinner of Wakefield," 1599, (see note (G) who represents our hero as contemporary with king Edward IV.* and the compiler of a foolish book called "The noble birth, &c. of Robin Hood," (see note (a) who commences it by informing us of his banishment by king Henry VIII. As well indeed might we suppose him to have lived before the time of Charlemagne, because sir John Harington, in his translation of the Orlando furioso, 1590. p. 391. has made

> "Duke' Ammon in great wrath thus wise 'to' speake,
> This is a Tale indeed of Robin Hood,
> Which to beleeve, might show my wits but weake:"

or to imagine his story must have been familiar to Plutarch,

* King Edward, it is true, is introduced in the "Lytell geste," &c. but the author has unquestionably meant the *first* of that name.

because in his Morals, translated by Dr. Philemon Holland, 1603. p. 644. we read the following passage: "Evenso [i. e. as the crane and fox serve each other in Æsop], when learned men at a table plunge and drowne themselves (as it were) in subtile problemes and questions interlaced with logicke, which the vulgar sort are not able for their lives to comprehend and conceive; whiles they also againe for their part come in with their foolish songs, and vain ballads of Robin-Hood and Little John, telling tales of a tubbe, or of a roasted horse, and such like." Who, indeed, would be apt to think that his skill in archery was known to Virgil? And yet, as interpreted by our facetious friend Mr. Charles Cotton, he tells us, that

> "Cupid was a little tyny,
> Cogging, lying, peevish nynny;
> But with a bow the shit-breecht elf
> Would shoot like Robin Hood himself."

In a word, if we are to credit translators, he must have existed before the siege of Troy: for thus, according to one of Homers:

> "Then came a choice companion
> Of Robin Hood and Little John,
> Who many a buck and many a doe,
> In Sherwood forest, with his bow,
> Had nabb'd; believe me it is true, sir,
> The fellows Christian name was Teucer."
> *Iliad*, by Bridges, 4to. p. 231.*

This last supposition, indeed, has even the respectable countenance of dan Geoffrey Chaucer:

> "Pandarus answerde, it may be well inough,
> And held with him of all that ever he saied,

* Thus, likewise, in a much earlier version from the same immortal bard (*Homer a la mode*, 1664), we read of

> "——greate Apollo, who's as good
> At pricks and buts as *Robin Hood*."

But in his hart he thought, and soft lough,
And to himselfe full soberly he saied,
From hasellwood there Jolly Robin plaied,
Shall come all that thou abidest here,
Ye, farewell all the snow of ferne yere."
Troilus (B. 5.) Speghts edition, 1602.

(C) " His extraction was noble, and his true name Robert Fitzooth."] In " an olde and auncient pamphlet," which Grafton the chronicler had seen, it was written that " This man discended of a noble parentage." The Sloane MS. says " He was of . . . . parentage ;" and though the material word is illegible, the sense evidently requires noble. So, likewise, the Harleian note: " It is said that he was of noble blood." Leland also has expressly termed him " nobilis." (Collectanea, I. 54.) The following account of his family will be found sufficiently particular. Ralph Fitzothes, or Fitzooth, a Norman, who had come over to England with William Rufus, marryed Maud or Matilda, daughter of Gilbert de Gaunt earl of Kyme and Lindsey, by whom he had two sons: Philip, afterward earl of Kyme, that earldom being part of his mothers dowry, and William. Philip the elder, dyed without issue; William was a ward to Robret de Vere earl of Oxford, in whose household he received his education, and who, by the kings express command, gave him in marriage to his own niece, the youngest of the three daughters of the celebrated lady Roisia de Vere, daughter of Aubrey de Vere, earl of Guisnes in Normandy, and lord high chamberlain of England under Henry I. and of Adeliza, daughter to Richard de Clare, earl of Clarence and Hertford, by Payn de Beauchamp baron of Bedford her second husband. The offspring of this marriage was our hero, Robert Fitzooth, commonly called Robin Hood. (See Stukeleys Palæographia Britannica, No. I. passim.)

A writer in the Gentleman's magazine, for March 1793,

under the signature D. H.* pretends that Hood is only a corruption of "o' th' wood, q. d. of Sherwood." This, to be sure, is an absurd conceit; but, if the name were a matter of conjecture, it might be probably enough referred to some particular sort of hood our hero wore by way of distinction or disguise. See Scots Discoverie of witchcraft, 1584. p. 522. In Jonsons masque of "The kings entertainment at Welbeck," (*Works*, 1756, vii. 53.) certain characters are introduced "in livery hoods," of whom Fitz-ale says,

> "Six hoods they are, and of the blood,
> They tell of ancient Robin Hood."

It may be remembered that Hugh *Capet*, the first king of France, of the third and last race, obtained that surname from a similar circumstance. It is unnecessary to add that Hood is a common surname at this day, as well as a place in Yorkshire, formerly *Hode*; and that Edward the 3d, in the 10th year of his reign, confirmed to Thomas, the son of *Robert de Hode*, of Hoveden, intail-general, certain places of moorland, *&c. in vasto de* Incklesmore, *&c.* (Ro. Pa. 10 E. 3. m. 31.)

(D) "He is frequently stiled . . earl of Huntingdon, a title to which, for the latter part of his life at least, he actually appears to have had some sort of pretension."] In Graftons "olde and auncient pamphlet," though the author had, as already noticed, said "this man discended of a NOBLE PARENTAGE," he adds, "or rather beyng of a base stocke and linage, was for his manhood and chivalry advaunced to the noble dignitie of an ERLE."

In the MS. note (Bib. Har. 1233) is the following passage: "It is said that he was of noble blood no lesse then an earle." Warner, in his Albions England, already cited, calls him "a county." The titles of Mundys two plays

* *Alias* R. G. the scurrilous and malignant editor of that degraded publication.

are: "The downfall," and "The death of Robert earle of Huntington." He is likewise introduced in that character in the same authors Metropolis coronata, hereafter cited. In his epitaph we shall find him expressly stiled "Robert earl of Huntingtun."

In "A pleasant commodie called Looke about you," printed in 1600, our hero is introduced, and performs a principal part. He is represented as the young earl of Huntington, and in ward to prince Richard, though his brother Henry, the young king, complains of his having "had wrong about his wardship." He is described as

> "A gallant youth, a proper gentleman;"

and is sometimes called "pretty earle," and "little wag." One of the characters thus addresses him:

> "But welcome, welcome, and young Huntington,
> Sweet Robyn Hude, honors best flowing bloome."

and calls him

> "——an honourable youth,
> Vertuous and modest, Huntingtons right heyre."

It is also said that

> "His father Gilbert was the smoothst fac't lord
> "That ere bare armes in England or in Fraunce."

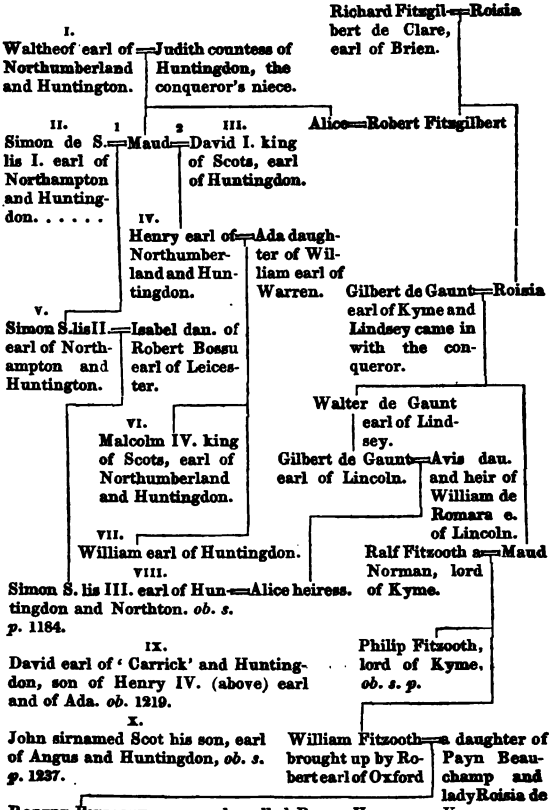
In one scene, "Enter Richard and Robert with coronets."

> "*Rich.* Richard the Prince of England, with his ward,
> The noble Robert Hood, earle Huntington,
> Present their service to your majestie."

Dr. Percys objection, that the most ancient poems make no mention of this earldom,* but only call him a yeoman, will be considered in another place. How he founded his pretensions to this title will be seen in his pedigree. Here it is.

* The authority cited by Grafton, in 1569, as then "olde and auncient" must have been, at least, of equal antiquity with the most ancient poems that Dr. P. is acquainted with.

" THE PEDIGREE OF ROBIN HOOD EARL OF HUNTINGTON.



* Stukeleys Palæographia Britannica, No. II. p. 115. In an inter-

(E) "In his youth he is reported to have been of a wild and extravagant disposition, &c."] Graftons pamphlet, after supposing him to have been "advaunced to the noble dignitie of an erle," continued thus: "But afterwardes he so prodigally exceeded in charges and expences, that he fell into great debt, by reason whereof, so many actions and sutes were commenced against him whereunto he answered not, that by

leaved copy of Robin Hoods garland formerly belonging to Dr. Stukeley, and now in the possession of Francis Douce esquire, opposite the 2d page of the 1st song, is the following note in his own hand:

"Guy earl of Warwick.

George Gamwell of Gamwell hall esq. — Joanna *magna* — Fitz Odoth

Robin Fitz Odoth

Gamwell the kings forester in Yorkshire, mentioned in Camden.

See my answer, No. II. of lady Roisia, where is Robin Hoods true pedigree."

The doctor seems, by this pedigree, to have founded our heros pretensions on his descent from Roisia, sister of Robert Fitzgilbert, husband of Alice, youngest daughter of Judith, countess of Huntingdon; which, whatever it might do in those times, would scarcely be thought sufficient to support such a claim, at present. Beside, though John the Scot dyed without issue, he left three sisters, all marryed to powerful barons, either in Scotland or in England, none of whom, however, assumed the title. It is, therefore, probable, after all, that Robin Hood derived his earldom by some other channel.

Dr. Stukeley, whose learned labours are sufficiently known and esteemed, was a professed antiquary, and a beneficed clergyman of the church of England. He has not, it is true, thought it necessary to cite any ancient or other authority in support of the above representations; nor is it in the editors power to supply the deficiency. Perhaps, indeed, the doctor might think himself intitled to expect that his own authority would be deemed sufficient: upon that, however, they must be content to rest. *Sit fides penes auctorem!* Mr Parkin, who published "A reply to the peevish, weak, and malevolent objections brought by Dr. Stukeley, in his Origines Roystonianæ, No. 2." (Norwich, 1748. 4to.) terms "his pedigree of Robin Hood, quite jocose, an original indeed!" (see pp. 27, 32.)

Otho and Fitz-Otho, it must be confessed, were common names among

order of lawe he was outlawed."* Leland must undoubtedly have had good authority for calling him "nobilis ille exlex."† Fordun supposes him in the number of those deprived of their estates by K. Hen. III. "Hoc intempore," says he, "de exheredatis surrexit & caput erexit ille famosissimus siccarius Robertus Hode & littill Johanne cum eorum complicibus." (p. 774.) The Sloane MS. says he was "so ryotous that he lost or sould his patrimony & for debt became an outlawe:" and the Harleian note mentions his "having wasted his estate in riotous courses." The former authority, however, gives a different, though, it may be, less credible, account of his being obliged to abscond. It is as foliows: "One of his first exployts was the going abrode into a forrest & bearing with him a bowe of exceeding great strength he fell into company with certayne rangers or woodmen, who fell to quarrel with him, as making showe to use such a bowe as no man was able to shoote withall. Whereto Robin replyed that he had two better then that at Lockesley, only he bare that with him nowe as a byrding bowe. At length the 'contention' grewe so hote that there was a wager layd about the kyllyng of a deere a greate distance of, for performance whereof Robin offered to lay his head to a certayne some of money, the advantage of which rash speach the others presently tooke.

the Anglo-Normans, ‖ but no such name as Othes, Ooth, Fitz-Othes, or Fitz-Ooth, has been elsewhere met with. Philip de Kime, also, was certainly a considerable landholder in the county of Lincoln, in the time of king Henry II. but it no where appears, except from Dr. Stukeley, that his surname was Fitz-Ooth.

The doctor likewise informs us that the arms of Ralph Fitz-Ooth, and consequently of our hero were, "g. two bendlets engrailed, o."

* Graftons chronicle, p. 85. † Collec. I. 54.

‖ "Filius Roberti filii Odonis est in custodia Domini Regis, et est vj annorum, et ipse est heres decime partis unius militis, et vix possunt inde habere victum suum ipse et mater sua." Rotulus de vidius, &c. (31 H. 2.) MSS. Har. 624.

So the marke being found out, one of them, both to make his hart faynt and hand unsteady, as he was about to shoote urged him with the losse of head if he myst the marke. Notwithstanding Robyn kyld the deare, and gave every man his money agayne, save to him which at the poynt of shooting so upbraided him with danger to loose his hed for that wager; & he sayd they would drinke togeyther: whereupon the others stomached the matter and from quarelling they grewe to fighting with him. But Robin, getting him somewhat of, with shooting dispatch them, and so fled away; and then betaking himselfe to lyve in the woods," &c.*

That he lurked or infested the woods is agreed by all. "Circa hæc tempora," says Major, "Robertus Hudus Anglus & parvus Joannes, latrones famatissimi, in nemoribus latuerunt."

Dr. Stukeley says that "Robin Hood took to this wild way of life, in imitation of his grandfather Geoffrey de Mandeville; who being a favorer of Maud empress, K. Stephen took him prisoner at S. Albans, and made him give up the tower of London, Walden, Plessis, &c. upon which he lived on plunder." (MS. note in his copy of Robin Hoods garland.)

(F) "Of these he chiefly affected Barnsdale, &c."] "Along on the lift hond," says Leland, "a iii. miles of betwixt Milburne and Feribridge I saw the wooddi and famose forrest of Barnesdale, wher thay say that Robyn Hudde lyvid like an outlaw." Itinerary, V. 101.

"They haunted about Barnsdale forrest, Compton [r. Plompton] parke,† and such other places." MS. Sloane.

"His principal residence," says Fuller, "was in Shirewood

* See Robin Hoods progress to Nottingham, part II. ballad 2.

† Plompton park, upon the banks of the Peterill, in Cumberland, was formerly very large, and set apart by the kings of England for the

forrest in this county [Notts], though he had another haunt (he is no fox that hath but one hole) near the sea in the North-riding in Yorkshire, where Robin Hoods bay still retaineth his name: not that he was any pirat, but a land-thief, who retreated to those unsuspected parts for his security." Worthies of England, p. 320.

In Thorotons Nottinghamshire, p. 505. is some account of the ancient and present state of Sherwood forest; but one looks in vain, through that dry detail of land-owners, for any particulars relating to our hero. "In anno domini 1194, king Richard the first, being a hunting in the forrest of Sherwood, did chase a hart out of the forrest of Sherwood into Barnesdale in Yorkshire, and because he could not there recover him, he made proclamation at Tickill in Yorkshire, and at divers other places there that no person should kill, hurt, or chase the said hart, but that he might safely retorne into forrest againe, which hart was afterwards called a hart-royall proclaimed. (Manwoods Forest laws, 1598, p. 25. from "an auncient recorde" found by him in the tower of Nottingham castle.)*

keeping of deer. It was disafforested or disparked, by Henry the 8th. See Camdens Britannia, by bishop Gibson, who seems to confound this park with Inglewood-forest, a district of sixteen miles in length, reaching from Carlile to Penrith, where the kings of England used to hunt, and Edward I. is reported to have killed 200 bucks in one day. *Ibi.*

* *Anno* 1194] *Vicesima nona die mensis martii* Richardus rex Angliæ *profectus est videre* Clipestone, *& forrestas de* Sirewode, *quas ipse nunquam viderat antea: & placuerunt ei multum, & eodem die rediit ad* Notingham." R. de Hoveden Annales, p. 736.

Drayton, (Polyolbion, song 26.) introduces Sherwood in the character of a nymph, who, out of disdain at the preference shewn by the poet to a sister-forest,

> "All self praise set apart, determineth to sing
> That lusty Robin Hood, who long time like a king
> Within her compass liv'd, and when he list to range,
> For some rich booty set, or else his air to change,
> To Sherwood still retir'd, his only standing court."

(*F) " Here he either found," &c.] After being outlawed, Grafton tells us, " for a lewde shift, as his last refuge, [he] gathered together a companye of roysters and cutters, and practised robberyes and spoyling of the kinges subjects, and occupied and frequented the forestes or wild countries." See also the following note.

(G) " Little John, William Scadlock, George a Green, pinder of Wakefield, Much a millers son, and a certain monk or friar named Tuck."] Of these the preeminence is incontestably due to Little John, whose name is almost constantly coupled with that of his gallant leader, " Robertus Hode & littill Johanne," are mentioned together by Fordun, as early as 1341; and later instances of the connection would be almost endless. After the words, " for debt became an outlaw," the Sloane MS. adds: " then joyninge to him many stout fellowes of lyke disposition, amongst whom one called Little John was principal or next to him, they haunted about Barnsdale forrest," &c. See notes (KK) (LL).

With respect to frier Tuck, " thogh some say he was an other kynd of religious man, for that the order of freyrs was not yet sprung up," (MS. Sloan.) yet as the Dominican friers (or friers preachers) came into England in the year 1221, upward of 20 years before the death of Robin Hood, and several orders of these religious had flourished abroad for some time, there does not seem much weight in that objection: nor in fact, can one pay much regard to the term frier, as it seems to have been the common title given by the vulgar (more especially after the reformation) to all the regular clergy, of which the friers were at once the lowest and most numerous. If frier Tuck be the same person who, in one of the oldest songs, is called the curtail frier of Fountains-dale, he must necessaryly have been one of the monks of that abbey, which

was of the Cistertian order. However this may be, frier Tuck is frequently noticed, by old writers, as one of the companions of Robin Hood, and as such was an essential character in the morris dance, (see note (FF). He is thus mentioned by Skelton, laureat, in his "goodly interlude" of Magnificence, written about the year 1500, and with an evident allusion to some game or practice now totally forgotten and inexplicable:

> "Another bade shave halfe my berde,
> And boyes to the pylery gan me plucke,
> And wolde have made me freer Tucke,
> To preche oute of the pylery hole."

In the year 1417, as Stow relates, "one, by his counterfeite name, called frier Tucke, with manie other malefactors, committed many robberies in the counties of Surrey & Sussex, whereupon the king sent out his writs for their apprehension." (Annales, 1592.)

George a Green is George o' the green, meaning perhaps the town-green, in which the pound or pinfold stood of which he had the care. He has been particularly celebrated, and "As good as George a Green" is still a common saying.* Drayton, describing the progress of the river Calder, in the west riding of Yorkshire, has the following lines:

> "It chanc'd she in her course on 'Kirkley' cast her eye,
> Where merry Robin Hood, that honest thief, doth lie;
> Beholding fitly too before how Wakefield stood,
> She doth not only think of lusty Robin Hood,
> But of his merry man, the pindar of the town
> Of Wakefield, George a Green, whose fames so far are blown
> For their so valiant fight, that every freemans song
> Can tell you of the same; quoth she, be talk'd on long,
> For ye were merry lads, and those were merry days."

Thus, too, Richard Brathwayte, in his poetical epistle "to all

* It occurs in "Tarltons newes out of purgatory," 1630, 4to. (entered on the stationers books in 1590).

true-bred northerne sparks of the generous society of the Cottoneers" (Strappado for the divell, 1615):

" But haste, my muse, in colours to display
Some auncient customes in their high-roade way,
. . . . . .
At least such places labour to make knowne
As former times have honour'd with renowne.
. . . . . .
The first whereof that I intend to show
Is merry Wakefield, and her pindar too,
Which fame hath blaz'd with all that did belong,
Unto that towne in many gladsome song,
The pindars valour, and how firme he stood
In th' townes defence 'gainst th' rebel Robin Hood,
How stoutly he behav'd himselfe, and would,
In spite of Robin, bring his horse to th' fold,
His many May-games which were to be seene
Yearly presented upon Wakefield greene,
Where lovely Jugge and lustie Tib would go,
To see Tom-lively turne upon the toe;
Hob, Lob, and Crowde the fidler would be there,
And many more I will not speake of here.
Good god! how glad hath been this hart of mine,
To see that towne, which hath, in former time,
So flourish'd and so gloried in her name,
Famous by th' pindar who first rais'd the same!
Yea, I have paced ore that greene and ore
And th' more I saw't I tooke delight the more,
" For where we take contentment in a place,
" A whole daies walke seemes as a cinqnepace.
Yet as there is no solace upon earth,
Which is attended evermore with mirth,
But when we are transported most with gladnesse,
Then suddenly our joy's reduc'd to sadnesse;
So far'd with me to see the pindar gone,
And of those jolly laddes that were not one
Left to survive: I griev'd more then Ile say:
(But now for Bradford I must hast away.)
. . . . . .
Unto thy task, my muse, and now make knowne,
The jolly shoo-maker of Bradford towne,
His gentle craft so rais'd in former time
By princely journey-men his discipline,
" Where he was wont with passengers to quaffe,
" But suffer none to carry up their staffe
Upon their shoulders, whilst they past through town,

> For if they did he soon would beat them downe;
> (So valiant was the souter) and from hence
> Twixt Robin Hood and him grew th' difference;
> Which, cause it is by most stage-poets writ,
> For brevity I thought good to omit."

In the latter part of this extract, honest Richard evidently alludes to "A pleasant conceyted comedie of George a Greene, the pinner of Wakefield; as it was sundry times acted by the servants of the right honourable the earle of Sussex," 1599, 4to. which has been erroneously ascribed to Heywood the epigrammatist, and is reprinted, with other trash, in the late edition of Dodsleys Old plays; only it unluckily happens that Robin Hood is almost the only person who has no difference with the souter (or shoe-maker) of Bradford. The play in short, (or at least that part of it which we have any concern with) is founded on the ballad of Robin Hood and the pinder of Wakefield, (see part II. song 3,) which it directly quotes, and is in fact a most despicable performance.* King Edward (the fourth) having taken king James of Scotland prisoner, after a most bloody battle near Middleham-castle, from which of 30,000 Scots not 5000 had escaped, comes with his royal captive in disguise to Bradford, where they meet Robin Hood and George a Green, who have just had a stout affray: and after having read this, and a great deal more such nonsensical stuff, captain Grose sagaciously "supposes, that this play has little or no foundation in history;" and very gravely sits down, and debates his opinion in form.

"The history of George a Green, pindar of the town of Wakefield," 4to. no date,† is a modern production, chiefly

* It, likewise, gives the proverb noticed in a preceding page thus: "Were he as good as George a Greene, I would strike him sure."

† There is an edition, in 1706, 8vo.

founded on the old play just mentioned, of neither authority nor merit.

Our gallant pinder is thus facetiously commemorated by Drunken Barnaby:

" Hinc diverso cursu, sero
Quod audissem de pindero
Wakefeeldensi; gloria mundi,
Ubi socii sunt jucundi,
Mecum statui peragrare
Georgii fustem visitare."

" Turning thence, none could me hinder
To salute the Wakefield pindar;
Who indeed is the world's glory,
With his comrades never sorry.
This was the cause, lest you should miss it,
George's club I meant to visit.

" Veni Wakefield peramænum,
Ubi quærens Georgium Greenum,
Non invenj, sed in lignum
Fixum reperi Georgii signum,
Ubi allam bibi feram
Donec Georgio fortior eram."

" Strait at Wakefield I was seen a,
Where I sought for George a Green a;
But could find not such a creature,
Yet on a sign I saw his feature,
Where strength of ale had so much stir'd me,
That I grew stouter far than Jordie."

Besides the companions of our hero enumerated in the text, and whose names are most celebrated and familiar, we find those of William of Goldsbrough, (mentioned by Grafton,) Right-hitting Brand, (by Mundy,) and Gilbert with the white hand, who is thrice named in the Lyttell geste of Robyn Hode, (I. 52. 71.) and is likewise noticed by bishop Gawin Douglas, in his Palice of Honour, printed at Edinburgh in 1579, but written before 1518:

" Thair saw I Maitlaind upon auld Beird Gray,
Robene Hude, and Gilbert with the quhite 'hand,'
How Hay of Nauchton slew, in Madin land."*

* Scottish poems, i. 122.

As no mention is made of Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough and William of Cloudeslie, either in the ancient legend, or in more than one of the numerous songs of Robin Hood, nor does the name of the latter once occur in the old metrical history of those famous archers, reprinted in Percys Reliques, and among pieces of ancient popular poetry, it is to be concluded that they flourished at different periods, or at least had no connection with each other. In a poem, however, intitled, "Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and young William of Cloudesley, the second part," 1616. 4to. b. 1. (Bib. Bod. Art. L. 71. being a more modern copy than that in Selden C. 39. which wants the title, but was probably printed with the first part, which it there accompanies, in 1605; differing considerably therefrom in several places; and containing many additional verses;) are the following lines (not in the former copy):

"Now beare thy fathers heart, my boy,
Said William of Cloudesley then,
When i was young i car'd not for
The brags of sturdiest men.
The pinder of Wakefield, George a Green,
I try'd a sommers day,
Yet he nor i were victors made
Nor victor'd went away.
Old Robin Hood, nor Little John,
Amongst their merry men all,
Nor fryer Tuck, so stout and young,
My courage could appall."

(H) "Marian."] Who or whatever this lady was, it is observable that no mention of her occurs either in the Lytell geste of Robyn Hode, or in any other poem or song concerning him, except the not very old ballad of Robin Hoods golden prize, where she is barely named, and a still more modern one of no merit (see part II. song 24).* She is an

* Surely the "lady" alluded to in the old May-game cannot be our maid Marian. The earliest notice of her occurs in Barclay's *Egloges*, about 1500, where she is evidently connected with Robin Hood. See note (Y).

important character, however, in the two old plays of The death and downfall of Robert earl of Huntington, written before 1600, and is frequently mentioned by dramatic or other writers about that period. Her presence, likewise, was considered as essential to the morris-dance. See note (FF.)

In the First part of K. Henry IV. Falstaff says to the hostess,—"There's no more faith in thee than in a stew'd prune; nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox; and for womanhood, maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee:" upon which Dr. Johnson observes, that "Maid Marian is a man dressed like a woman, who attends the dancers of the morris." "In the ancient songs of Robin Hood," says Percy, "frequent mention is made of maid Marian, who appears to have been his concubine. I could quote," adds he, "many passages in my old MS. to this purpose, but shall produce only one:*

> "Good Robin Hood was living then,
> Which now is quite forgot,
> And so was fayre maid Marian, &c."

Mr. Steevens, too, after citing the old play of The downfall of Robert earl of Huntington, 1601, to prove "that maid Marian was originally a name assumed by Matilda, the daughter of Robert lord Fitzwater, while Robin Hood remained in a state of outlawry," observes, that "Shakspeare speaks of maid Marian in her degraded state, when she was represented by a strumpet or a clown:" and refers to figure 2 in the plate at the end of the play, with Mr. Tollets obser-

* Without "the ancient songs," to which the doctor refers, are confined to his "old MS." he evidently asserts what he would probably find it difficult to prove. As for the passage he produces, it seems nothing to the purpose; as, in the first place, it is apparently not "ancient;" and, in the second, it is apparently not from a "song of Robin Hood."

vations on it. The widow, in sir W. Davenants Love and honour, says: "I have been mistress Marian in a maurice ere now;" and Mr. Warton* quotes an old piece, intitled "Old Meg of Herefordshire for a maid Marian, and Hereford town for a morris-dance: or 12 morris-dancers in Herefordshire of 1200 years old," London, 1609, quarto: which is dedicated, he says, to one Hall, a celebrated tabourer in that country.† See note (FF).

(I) "His company, &c."] See the entire passage quoted from Major in a subsequent note. "By such bootyes as he could get," says the writer of the Sloane MS. "his company encreast to an hundred and a halfe."

(J)—"the words of an old writer."] The author of the Sloane manuscript; which adds: "after such maner he procured the pynner of Wakefeyld to become one of his company, and a freyr called Muchel [r. Tuck] ... Scarlock he induced upon this occasion: one day meeting him as he walket solitary & like to a man forlorne, because a mayd to whom he was affyanced was taken from [him] by the violence of her frends, & given to another that was old & welthy, whereupon Robin, understanding when the maryage-day

* Mr. Warton, having observed that "The play of Robin and Marian is said to have been performed by the school-boys of Angiers, according to annual custom, in the year 1392: The boys were deguisiez, says the old French record; and they had among them un fillette desguisee; (Carpent. Du Cange, v. Robinet-Pentecoste.)" adds "Our old character of Mayd Marian may be hence illustrated." (His. En. po. i. 245.) This, indeed, seems sufficiently plausible; but unfortunately the Robin and Marian of Angiers are not the Robin and Marian of Sherwood. The play is still extant. See Fabliaux ou contes, Paris, 1781. ii. 144. There are, likewise, some very ancient pastoral ballads on the subject of these two lovers. See La Borde, *Essai sur la musique*, ii. 163, 215. But, in fact, the names of *Robin* and *Marion* seem to have been used by the *chansonniers* of antiquity like those of *Colin* and *Phœbe*, &c.

† In 1502, Richard Jones, stationer, entered on the company's books, "A plesant fancie, or merrie conceyt, called the passion et morrys, daunst by a crue of 8 couple of wores."

should be, came to the church as a begger, & having his own company not far of, which came in so soone as they hard the sound of his horne, he tooke the bryde perforce from him that [bare] in hand to have marryed her, & caused the preist to wed her & Scarlocke togeyther." (See part II. song 8.) This MS. of which great part is merely the old legend or Lytell geste of Robyn Hode turned into prose, appears to have been written before the year 1600.

(K) " In shooting, &c."] MS. Sloan. Grafton also speaks of our heros " excellyng principally in archery or shooting, his manly courage agreeyng thereunto."

Their archery, indeed, was unparalleled, as both Robin Hood and Little John have frequently shot an arrow a measured mile, or 1760 yards, which it is supposed, no one, either before or since, was ever able to do. " Tradition," says master Charlton, " informs us that in one of 'Robin Hoods' peregrinations, he, attended by his trusty mate Little John, went to dine [at Whitby-abbey] with the abbot Richard, who, having heard them often famed for their great dexterity in shooting with the long bow, begged them after dinner to shew him a specimen thereof; when, to oblige the abbot, they went up to the top of the abbey, whence each of them shot an arrow, which fell not far from Whitby-laths, but on the contrary side of the lane; and in memorial thereof, a pillar was set up by the abbot in the place where each of the arrows was found, which are yet standing in these our days; that field where the pillar for Robin Hood's arrow stands being still called Robin Hood's field, and the other where the pillar for Little John's arrow is placed, still preserving the name of John's field. Their distance from Whitby-abbey is more than a measured mile, which seems very far for the flight of an arrow, and is a circumstance that will stagger

the faith of many; but as to the credibility of the story, every reader may judge thereof as he thinks proper; only I must here beg leave to observe that these very pillars are mentioned, and the fields called by the aforesaid names, in the old deeds for that ground, now in the possession of Mr. Thomas Watson." (History of Whitby, York, 1779. p. 146.)*

Dr. Meredith Hanmer, in his Chronicle of Ireland, (p. 179.) speaking of Little John, says, "There are memorable acts reported of him, which I hold not for truth, that he would shoot an arrow a mile off, and a great deale more; but them," adds he, "I leave among the lyes of the land."† See note (KK).

* "The quarry from whence king Wolfere fetched stones for his royal structure (i.e. Peterborough] was undoubtedly that of Bernach near unto Stamford..... And I find in the charter of K. Edward the Confessor, which he granted to the abbot of Ramsey, that the abbot of Ramsey should give to the abbot and convent of Peterburgh 4000 eeles in the time of Lent, and in consideration thereof the abbot of Peterburgh should give to the abbot of Ramsey as much freestone from his pitts in Bernack, and as much ragstone from his pitts in Peterburgh as he should need. Nor did the abbot of Peterburgh from these pits furnish only that but other abbies also, as that of St. Edmunds-Bury: in memory whereof there are two long stones yet standing upon a balk in Castor-field, near unto Gunwade-ferry; which erroneous tradition hath given out to be draughts of arrows from Alwalton church-yard thither; the one of Robin Hood, and the other of Little John; but the truth is, they were set up for witnesses, that the carriages of stone from Bernack to Gunwade-ferry, to be conveyed to S. Edmunds-Bury, might pass that way without paying toll; and in some old terrars they are called S. Edmunds stones. These stones are nicked in their tops after the manner of arrows, probably enough in memory of S. Edmund, who was shot to death with arrows by the Danes." Guntons History of the church of Peterburgh, 1686, p. 4.

† "In this relation," Mr. Walker observes, "the doctor not only evinces his credulity, but displays his ignorance of archery; for the ingenious and learned Mr. Barrington, than whom no man can be better informed on the subject, thinks that eleven score and seven yards is the utmost extent that an arrow can be shot from a long bow." (Archæologia, vol. viii). According to tradition, he adds, Little John shot an arrow from the Old-bridge, Dublin, to the present site of St. Michaels church, a distance not exceeding, he believes, that mentioned by Mr.

(L) "An outlaw, in those times, being deprived of protection, owed no allegiance, &c."] Such a character was, doubtless, at the period treated of, in a very critical situation; it being equally as legal and meritorious to hunt down and dispatch him as it was to kill a wolf, the head of which animal he was said to bear. "Item foris facit," says Bracton, (who wrote about the time,) omnia que pacis sunt, quia a tempore quo utlagatus est caput gerit lupinum, ita ut impune ab omnibus interfici possit. (l. 2. c. 35.) In the great

Barrington. (Historical essay on the dress of the ancient and modern Irish, p. 129.)

What Mr. Barrington "thinks" may be true enough, perhaps, of the Toxophilite society and other modern archers; but people should not talk of Robin Hood who never shot in his bow. The above ingenious writers censure of Dr. Hanmers credulity and ignorance, seems to be misapplied; since he cannot be supposed to believe what he holds not for truth, and actually leaves among the lyes of the land.

See also the old song, printed in the appendix, p. 207. Drayton, who wrote before archery had fallen into complete disuse, says—

"At marks full forty score they us'd to prick and rove."

That Mr. Barrington, indeed, was very ill informed on the subject is evident from a most scarce book, in the editors possession, intitled "Aime for the archers of St. George's fields, containing the names of all the marks in the same fields, with their true distances according to the dimensuration of the line. Formerly gathered by Richard Hannis, and now corrected by Thomas Bick, and others. London, Printed by N. Howell for Robert Minehard and Benjamin Brownsmith, and are to be sold at the sign of the man in the moon in Blackman street, 1664." 16mo. where the distance from *Alpha* to *Bicks memorial* is 18 score, 16 yards; and 11 score 7 yards (though there are inferior numbers, the lowest being 9, 12) appears to be a very moderate shot indeed. Two of these marks are *Robin Hood* and *Little John*. See also Shakspeare's *Second part of K. Henry IV.* act 3, scene 2, where it is say'd that *Old Double* "would have clapp'd i'the clout at *twelve score;* and carry'd you a forehand shaft a *fourteen* and *fourteen and a half*:" and the notes upon the passage in Steevens's edition, 1793. It is probable after all, that the word *forty* in Drayton is an error, of the transcriber or pressman, for *fourteen*.

Whatever Robin Hoods father might do, there can be no question that the author of the old ballad in which he is mentioned (Part II. song I.) has "shot in a lusty strong bow," when he speaks of

"Two north-country miles and an inch at a shot."

roll of the exchequer, in the 7th year of king Richard I. is an allowance by writ, of two marks, to Thomas de Prestwude, for bringing to Westminster the head of William de Elleford an outlaw. (See Madoxes History of the Exchequer, 136.) Those who received or consorted with a person outlawed were subject to the same punishment. Such was the humane policy of our enlightened ancestoss! See note (S).

(M)

" ——— how,
. . . . they could discourse
The freezing hours away!"]

(Cymbeline, act 3. scene 3:) The chief subjects of our heros conversation are supposed, by a poetical genius of the 16th century, to have been the commendation of a forest-life, and the ingratitude of mankind.

" I have no tales of Robin Hood, though mal-content was he
In better daies, first Richards daies, and liv'd in woods as we
A Tymon of the world; but not devoutly was he soe,
And therefore praise I not the man: but for from him did groe
Words worth the note, a word or twaine of him ere hence we goe.
Those daies begot some mal-contents, the principall of whome
A county was, that with a troope of yomandry did rome,
Brave archers and deliver men, since nor before so good,
Those took from rich to give the poore, and manned Robin Hood.
He fed them well, and lodg'd them safe in pleasant caves and bowers,
Oft saying to his merry men, What juster life than ours?
Here use we tallents that abroad the churles abuse or hide,
Their coffers excrements, and yeat for common wants denide.
We might have sterved for their store, & they have dyc'st our bones,
Whose tongues, driftes, harts, intice, meane, melt, as syrens, foxes, stones,
Yea even the best that betterd them heard but aloofe our mones.
And redily the churles could prie and prate of our amis,
Forgetfull of their owne. . . .
I did amis, not missing friends that wisht me to amend:
I did amend, but missed friends when mine amis had end:
My friends therefore shall finde me true, but I will trust no frend.
Not one I knewe that wisht me ill, nor any workt me well,
To lose, lacke, live, time, frends, in yncke, an hell, an hell, an hell!
Then happie we (quoth Robin Hood) in merry Sherwood that dwell.*

* Warners Albions England, 1602, p. 132. It is part of the hermits speech to the earl of Lancaster.

It has been conjectured, however, that, in the winter season, our hero and his companions severally quartered themselves in villages or country-houses more or less remote, with persons of whose fidelity they were assured. It is not improbable, at the same time, that they might have tolerably comfortable habitations erected in the woods.

Archery, which our hero and his companions appear to have carried to a state of perfection, continued to be cultivated for some ages after their time, down, indeed, to that of Henry VIII. or about the year 1540, when, owing to the introduction of artillery and matchlock-guns, it became neglected, and the bowmen of Cressy and Agincourt utterly extinct; though it may be still a question whether a body of expert archers would not, even at this day, be superior to an equal number armed with muskets.* The loss sustained from this change by the people at large seems irreparable. Anciently, the use of the bow or bill qualified every man for a soldier; and a body of peasants, led on by a Tyler or a Cade, was not less formidable than any military force that could be raised to oppose them: by which means the people from time to time preserved the very little liberty they had, and which their tyrants were constantly endeavouring to wrest from them. See how the case stands at present: the sovereign, let him be who or what he will, (kings have been tyrants and may be so again,) has a standing army, well disciplined and accoutred, while the subjects or people are absolutely defenceless: as much care having been taken, particularly since

* Sir Roger Williams, in his *Briefe discourse of warre*, 1590, has a chapter "To proove bow-men the worst shot vsed in these daies." Sir John Smythe, however, was of a different opinion. See his "Discourses concerning the formes and effects of divers sorts of weapons, &c. As also, of the great sufficiencie, excellencie, and wonderful effects of archers," 1590, 4to. See also a different treatise by him upon the same subject, in Num. 192 of the Harleian MSS.

" the glorious revolution," to deprive them of arms as was formerly bestowed to enforce their use and practice.* The following extract from Hales Historia placitorum coronæ (i. 118.) will serve to shew how familiar the bow and arrow was in the 14th century. " M. 22. E. 3. Rot. 117. coram rege Ebor. This was the case of Henry Vescy, who had been indicted before the sheriff in turno suo . . . of divers felonies, whereupon the sheriff mandavit commissionem suam Henrico de Clyderawe & aliis ad capiendum prædictum H. Vescy, & salvo ducendum usque castrum de Ebor." Vescy would not submit to an arrest, but fled, & inter fugiendum shot with his bow and arrows at his pursuers, but in the end was kild by Clyderawe :" to which may be added a remarkable passage in Harisons " Description of England," (prefixed to Holinsheds chronicle, 1587,) to prove how much it had declined in the 16th. " In times past," says he, " the cheefe force of England consisted in their long bowes. But now we have in maner generallie given over that kind of artillerie, and for long bowes in deed doo practise to shoot compasse for our pastime; which kind of shooting can never yeeld anie smart stroke, nor beat down our enemies, as our countriemen were woont to doo at everie time of need. Certes the Frenchmen and Rutters † deriding our new archerie in respect of their corslets, will not let, in open skirmish, if anie leisure serve, to turne up their tailes, and crie, Shoote, English; and all because our strong shooting is decaied and laid in bed. But if some of our Englishmen now lived that served king Edward the third in his warres

* " A prince, who fills the throne with a disputed title, dares not arm his subjects; the only method of securing a people fully, both against domestic oppression, and foreign conquest." Humes *Essays*, (" Of the Protestant succession.")

† Flemings.

with France, the breech* of such a varlet should have beene nailed to his bum with one arrow, and an other fethered in his bowels, before he should have turned about to see who shot the first." (p. 198.) Bishop Latimer, in his sixth sermon before K. Edward VI. gives an interesting account how the sons of yeomen were, in his infancy, trained up to the bow. "But now," says he, "we have taken up whooring in townes, instead of shooting in the fieldes."

(N)

" All clad in Lincoln green—"]

This species of cloth is mentioned by Spenser (Faerie queene, VI. ii. 5.)

> " All in a woodmans jacket he was clad
> Of Lincolne greene, belay'd with silver lace;
> And on his head an hood with aglets sprad,
> And by his side his hunters horne he hanging had."

It is likewise noticed by our poet himself, in another place:

" Swains in shepherds gray, and gyrles in Lincolne greene."†

See Polyolbion, song XXV. where the marginal note says, "Lincolne anciently dyed the best green in England." Thus Coventry had formerly the reputation of dying the best blue. See Rays Proverbs, p. 178. Kendal greene is equally famous, and appears to have been cloth of a similar quality. This colour was adopted by foresters to prevent their being too readyly discovered by the deer. See Sir John Wynnes History of the Guedir family, (Barringtons Miscellanies,) p. 419. Thus the Scotish highlanders used to wear brown plaids to

* Breeches.

† Thus also in part II. ballad 1.

> " She got on her holyday kirtle and gown,
> They were of a light Lincolne green."

prevent their being distinguished among the heath. It is needless to observe that green has ever been the favourite dress of an archer, hunter, &c. See note (DD).* We now call it a Saxon or grass green:

"His coat is of a Saxon green, his waistcoat's of a plaid." O. song.

Lincoln green was well known in France in or before the thirteenth century. Thus, in an old fabliau, transprosed by M. Le Grand (Fabliaux ou contes, iv. 13.) "Il mit donc son surcot fourré d'écureuil, et sa belle robe d'Estanfort teinte en verd." Estanfort is Stamford, in Lincolnshire.† This cloth is, likewise, often mentioned by the old Scotish poets under the names of Lincum licht, Lincum twyne, &c. and appears to have been in universal request: and yet, notwithstanding this cloud of evidence, Mr. Pinkerton has had the confidence to assert that "no particular cloth was ever made at Lincoln." (See Ancient Scotish poems, ii. 430.) But, indeed, this worthy gentleman, as Johnson said of Goldsmith, only stumbles upon truth by accident.

* In the sign of The green man and still, we perceive a huntsman, in a green coat, standing by the side of a still; in allusion, as it has been facetiously conjectured, to the partiality shewn by that description of gentry to a morning dram. The genuine representation, however, should be the green-man, (or man who deals in green herbs,) with a bundle of pepper-mint, or penny-royal, under his arm, which he brings to have distilled.

And farewell all gaie garments now,
With jewels riche of rare devise:
Like Robin Hood, I wot not how,
I must goe raunge in woodmens wyse,
Cladde in a cote of greene or gray,
And gladde to get it if I maye.

The workes of a young wyt, Done by N. B. Gent. 1577, 4to. b. l.

† There appears, however, to be a town of this name in Flanders, which may be the place here meant. The above conjecture, therefore, will be received for no more than it is worth.

(O)

" From wealthy abbots chests, &c."]

" But who," exclaims Dr. Fuller, having cited this passage, " made him a judge? or gave him a commission to take where it might be best spared, and give where it was most wanted?" That same power, one may answer, which authorises kings to take where it can be worst spared, and give it where it is least wanted. Our hero, in this respect, was a knight-errant; and wanted no other commission than that of Justice, whose cause he militated. His power, compared with that of the king of England, was, by no means, either equally usurped, or equally abused: the one reigned over subjects (or slaves) as a master (or tyrant), the other possessed no authority but what was delegated to him by the free suffrage of his adherents, for their general good: and, as for the rest, it would be absurd to blame in Robin what we should praise in Richard.* The latter, too, warred in remote parts of the world against nations from which neither he nor his subjects had sustained any injury; the former at home against those to whose wealth, avarice, or ambition, he might fairly attribute not only his own misfortunes, but the misery of the oppressed and enslaved society he had quitted. In a word, every man who has the power has also the authority to pursue the ends of justice, to regulate the gifts of fortune, by transfering the superfluities of the rich to the necessities of the poor; by relieving the oppressed, and even, when necessary, destroying the oppressor. These are the objects of the social

* When Bulas, or Felix, the robber, was brought before Papinian, the latter asked him why he gave himself up to robbing and spoiling: " And why, sir," was the answer, " are you ' a governor,' " See Dio Cassius in Severus.

" Because I do that," said the pirate to Alexander, " with a single ship which thou dost with a great fleet, I am called a thief, and thou art called a king."

union, and every individual may, and to the utmost of his power should, endeavour to promote them. Had our Robin Hood been, like M'Donald of Barrisdale, a reader of Virgil, he, as well as that gallant chief, might have inscribed on his baldric,

> "Hæ tibi erunt artes; pacis componere mores,
> Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos."*

(*O) "But it is to be remembered," &c.] The passage from Majors work, which has been already quoted, is here given entire, (except as to a single sentence introduced in another place). "Circa hæc tempora [s. Ricardi I.] ut auguror, Robertus Hudus & Parvus Joannes latrones famatissimi, in nemoribus latuerunt, solum opulentum virorum bona diripientes. Nullum nisi eos invadentem vel resistentem pro suarum rerum tuitione occiderunt. Centum sagittarios ad pugnam aptissimos Robertus latrociniis aluit quos 400 viri fortissimi invadere non audebant. Fæminam nullum opprimi permisit, nec pauperum bona surripuit, verum eos

* See Pennants Tour in Scotland MDCCLXXII. part I. p. 404. The original reading, whether altered by mistake or design, is—

> "—— pacisque imponere morem."

One might, to the same purpose, address our hero in the words of Plautus: (Trinummus, Act IV. scene i.)

"Atque hanc tuam gloriam jam ante auribus acceperam, et nobiles apud homines,
Pauperibus te parcere solitum, divites damnare atque domare.
Abi, laudo. scis ordine, ut æquom'st,
Tractare homines, hoc dîs dignum'st, semper mendicis modesti sint."

> "——— I've heard before
> This commendation of you, and from great ones,
> That you were wont to spare the indigent,
> And crush the wealthy.—I applaud your justice
> In treating men according to their merits.—
> 'Tis worthy of the gods to have respect
> Unto the poor."

ex abbatum bonis ablatis opipare pavit. Viri rapinam improbo sed latronum omnium humanissimus & princeps erat." (Majoris Britanniæ historia. Edin. 1740, p. 128.)

Stowe, in his Annales, 1592, p. 227. gives an almost literal version of the above passage; Richard Robinson versifies it;* and Camden slightly refers to it.

(P)—" has had the honour to be compared to the illustrious Wallace, &c."] In the first volume of Pecks intended supplement to the Monasticon, consisting of collections for the history of Præmonstratensian monasteries, now in the British-museum, is a very curious riming Latin poem, with the following title: " Prioris Alnwicensis de bello Scotico apud Dumbarr, tempore rigis Edwardi I. dictamen sive rithmus Latinus, quo de Willielmo Wallace, Scotico illo Robin Whood, plura sed invidiose canit:" and in the margin are the following date and reference: 22. Julii 1304. 32. E. 1. Regist. Prem. fol. 59. a." This, it may be observed, is the first known instance of our heros name being mentioned by any writer whatever; and affords a strong and respectable proof of his early popularity.

(Q)—" the abbot of St. Marys in York"] " In the year 1088 Alan earl of Richmond founded here a stately abbey

* " Richard Cœur de Lyon cald a king and conquerour was,
With Phillip king of France who did unto Jerusalemm passe:
. . . . . .
In this kings time was Robyn Hood, that archer and outlawe,
And little John his partener eke, unto them which did drawe
One hondred tall and good archers, on whom foure hondred men,
Were their power never so strong, could not give onset then;
The abbots, monkes, and carles rich these onely did molest,
And reskewd woemen when they saw of theeves them so opprest;
Restoring poore mens goods, and eke abundantly releeved
Poore travellers which wanted food, or were with sicknes greeved."
(Third assertion, &c. (quoted elsewhere.)

for black monks to the honour of St. Olave; but it was afterwards dedicated to the blessed virgin by the command of king William Rufus. Its yearly revenues at the suppression amounted to 1550*l.* 7*s.* 9*d.* Dugd. 2850*l.* 1*s.* 5*d.* Speed." Willis's Mitred abbeys, i. 214. The abbots in our heros time were—

Robert de Harpsham (el. 1184) ob. 1198.
Robert de Longo Campo. ob. 1239.
William Rondele. ob. 1244.
Tho. de Wharterhille. ob. 1258.

(R)—" the sheriff of Nottinghamshire"] Ralph Murdach was sherif of Derby and Nottinghamshires in the 1st year of king Richard I. and for the 7 years preceding, and William Brewerre in his 6th year, between which and the 1st no name appears on the roll. See Fullers Worthies, &c.

In the year 1195, Hubert archbishop of Canterbury, justiciary of all England, sent throughout the kingdom this form of oath: that all men of the realm of England would keep the peace of the lord the king to their power; and that they would neither be thieves nor robers, nor the receivers of such, nor consent to them in any thing; and that when they were able to know such-like malefactors, they would take them to the utmost of their power, and deliver them to the sheriff; who in no wise should be delivered unless by the lord the king or his chief justice; and if unable to take them, they should cause the bailiffs of the lord the king to know who they were: and, cry being raised for pursuing outlaws, robbers, theives, or their receivers, all should fully do that suit to the utmost of their power, &c. Knights were to be assigned for these purposes, and men chosen and faithful were sent to execute them in every county, who by the oath of true men of the vicinages took many and put them in the kings prisons;

but many, being forewarned, and conscious of evil, left their houses and possessions, and fled. (*R. de Hoveden*, p. 757.)

(S)—" an anecdote preserved by Fordun, &c."] " De quo eciam quædam commendabilia recitantur, sicut patuit in hoc, quod cum ipse quondam in Barnisdale iram [f. ob iram] regis & fremitum principis, missam, ut solitus erat, devotissime audiret, nec aliqua necessitate volebat interrumpere officium, quadam die cum audiret missam, à quodam vicecomite & ministris regis, sæpius per prius ipsum infestantibus, in illo secretissimo loco nemorali, ubi missæ interfuit, exploratus, venientes ad eum qui de suis hoc perceperunt, ut omni annisu fugeret suggesserunt, qui, ob reverentiam sacramenti, quod tunc devotissime venerabatur, omnino facere recusavit. Sed ceteris suis, ob metum mortis trepidantibus, Robertus tantum confisus in eum, quem coluit reveritus, cum paucissimis, qui tunc forte ei affuerunt, inimicos congressus & eos de facili devicit, et de eorum spoliis ac redemptione ditatus, ministros ecclesiæ & missas semper in majori veneratione semper & de post habere præelegit, attendens quod wlgariter dictum est:

Hunc deus exaudit, qui missam sæpius audit."

J. De Fordun Scotichronicon, à Hearne. Ox. 1722. p. 774.

This passage is found in no other copy of Forduns chronicle than one in the Harleian library. Its suppression in all the rest may be fairly accounted for on the principle which is presumed to have influenced the conduct of the ancient English historians. See note (a).

(T)—"a proclamation was published, &c."] "The king att last," says the Harleian MS. " sett furth a proclamation to have him apprehended, &c." Grafton, after having told us that he " practised robberyes, &c." adds, "The which beyng certefyed to the king, and he beyng greatly offended therewith, caused his proclamation to be made that whosoever

would bryng him quicke or dead, the king would geve him a great summe of money, as by the recordes, in the Exchequer is to be seene: But of this promise no man enjoyed any benefite. For the sayd Robert Hood, being afterwardes troubled with sicknesse, &c." (p. 85.) See note (L).

(U) "At length, the infirmities of old age increasing upon him, &c."] Thus Grafton: "The sayd Robert Hood, beyng troubled with sicknesse, came to a certain nonry in Yorkshire called Bircklies [r. Kircklies], where desiryng to be let blood, he was betrayed and bled to death." The Sloane MS. says that "[Being] dystempered with could and age, he had great payne in his lymmes, his bloud being corrupted, therfore, to be eased of his payne by letting bloud, he repayred to the priores of Kyrkesly, which some say was his aunt, a woman very skylful in physique & surgery; who, perceyving him to be Robyn Hood, & waying howe fel an enimy he was to religious persons, toke reveng of him for her owne howse and all others by letting him bleed to death. It is also sayd that one sir Roger of Doncaster, bearing grudge to Robyn for some injury, incyted the priores, with whome he was very familiar, in such a maner to dispatch him." See the Lytell geste of Robyn Hode, ad finem. The Harleian MS. after mentioning the proclamation "sett furth to have him apprehended" adds, "at which time it happened he fell sick at a nunnery in Yorkshire called Birkleys [r. Kirkleys]; & desiring there to be let blood, hee was beytrayed & made bleed to death."

Kirkleys, Kirklees or Kirkleghes, formerly Kuthale, in the deanry of Pontefract, and archdeaconry of the west riding of Yorkshire, was a Cistercian, or, as some say, a Benedictine nunnery, founded, in honour of the virgin Mary and St. James, by Reynerus Flandrensis in the reign of king Henry II. Its revenues at the dissolution were somewhat about

£.20 and the site was granted (36 Hen. 8.) to John Tasburgh and Henry Savill, from whom it came to one of the ancestors of Sir George Armytage bart. the present possessor. The remains of the building (if any) are very inconsiderable, and its register has been searched after in vain. See Tanners Notitia, p. 674. Thoresbys Ducatus Leodiensis, p. 91. Hearnes "Account of several antiquities in and about the university of Oxford," at the end of Lelands Itinerary, vol. ii. p. 128.

In 1706 was discovered, among the ruins of the nunnery, the monument of Elisabeth de Staynton prioress; but it is not certain that this was the lady from whom our hero experienced such kind assistance. See Thoresby and Hearne ubi supra.

"One may wonder," says Dr. Fuller, "how he escaped the hand of justice, dying in his bed, for ought is found to the contrary; but it was because he was rather a merry than a mischievous thief (complementing passengers out of their purses) never murdering any but deer, and .... 'feasting' the vicinage with his venison." (Worthies, p. 320.) See the following note.

(V) "He was interred under some trees at a short distance from the house; a stone being placed over his grave with an inscription to his memory. "Kirkley monasterium monialium, ubi Ro: Hood nobilis ille exlex sepultus." Lelands Collectanea, i. 54. "Kirkleys Nunnery, in the Woods whereof Robin Hoods grave is, is between Halifax and Wakefield upon Calder." Letter from Jo. Savile to W. Camden, Illus. viro epis. 1691.

"———— ——— as Caldor comes along,
It chanc d she in her course on 'Kirkley' cast her eye,
Where merry Robin Hood, that honest thief, doth lie."
(Poly-Olbion, Song 28.)

See also Camdens Britannia, 1695, p. 709.

In the second volume of Dr. Stukeleys Itinerarium curiosum is an engraving of " the prospect of Kirkley's abby, where Robin Hood dyed, from the footway leading to Heartishead church, at a quarter of a mile distance. A. The New Hall. B. The Gatehouse of the Nunnery. C. The trees among which Robin Hood was buryed. D. The way up the Hill were this was drawn. E. Bradley wood. F. Almondbury hill. G. Castle field. Drawn by Dr. Johnston among his Yorkshire antiquitys. p. 54. of the drawings. E. Kirkall, sculp." It makes plate 99 of the above work, but is unnoticed in the letter press.

According to the Sloane MS. the prioress, after " letting him bleed to death, buryed him under a great stone by the hywayes syde :" which is agreeable to the account in Graftons chronicle, where it is said that, after his death, " the prioresse of the same place caused him to be buried by the highway-side, where he had used to rob and spoyle those that passed that way. And vpon his grave the sayde prioresse did lay a very fayre stone, wherein the names of Robert Hood, William of Goldesborough, and others were graven. And the cause why she buried him there was, for that the common passengers and travailers, knowyng and seeyng him there buryed, might more safely and without feare take their jorneys that way, which they durst not do in the life of the sayd outlawes. And at eyther ende of the sayde tombe was erected a crosse of stone, which is to be seene there at this present."

" Near unto ' Kirklees' the noted Robin Hood lies buried under a grave-stone that yet remains near the park, but the inscription scarce legible." Thoresbys Ducatus Leodiensis, fo. 1715, p. 91. In the Appendix, p. 576. is the following note, with a reference to " page 91 :"

" Amongst the papers of the learned Dr. Gale, late dean of Yorke, was found this epitaph of Robin Hood:

Hear undernead dis laitl stean
lait robert earl of Huntingtun
nea arcir ber at hie sa geud
an pipl kauld im robin heud
sick utlaw; at hi an it men
bil england nibr si agen.
obiit 24 [r. 14] kal dekembris 1247.

The genuineness of this epitaph has been questioned. Dr. Percy, in the first edition of his " Reliques of ancient English poetry," (1765,) says " It must be confessed this epitaph is suspicious, because in the most ancient poems of Robin Hood, there is no mention of this imaginary earldom." This reason, however, is by no means conclusive, the most ancient poem now extant having no pretension to the antiquity claimed by the epitaph: and indeed the doctor himself should seem to have afterward had less confidence in it, as, in both the subsequent editions, those words are omitted and the learned critic merely observes that the epitaph appears to him suspicious. It will be admitted that the bare suspicion of this ingenious writer, whose knowledge and judgment of ancient poetry are so conspicuous and eminent, ought to have considerable weight. As for the present editors part, though he does not pretend to say that the language of this epitaph is that of Henry the thirds time, nor indeed to determine of what age it is, he can perceive nothing in it from whence one should be led to pronounce it spurious, i. e. that it was never inscribed on the grave-stone of Robin Hood. That there actually was some inscription upon it in Thoresbys time, though then scarce legible, is evident from his own words: and it should be remembered, as well

that the last century was not the æra of imposition, as that Dr. Gale was both too good and too learned a man either to be capable of it himself or to be liable to it from others.

That industrious chronologist and topographer, as well as respectable artist and citizen, master Thomas Gent, of York, in his "List of religious houses," annexed to "The ancient and modern state of" that famous city, 1730, 12mo. p. 234. informs us that he had been told, "That his [Robin Hoods] tombstone, having his effigy thereon, was order'd, not many years ago, by a certain knight to be placed as a harth-stone in his great hall. When it was laid over-night, the next morning it was 'surprizingly' removed [on or to] one side; and so three times it was laid, and as successively turned aside. The knight, thinking he had done wrong to have brought it thither, order'd it should be drawn back again; which was performed by a pair of oxen and four horses, when twice the number could scarce do it before. But as this," adds the sagacious writer, "is a story only, it is left to the reader, to judge at pleasure." N. B. This is the second instance of a miracle wrought in favour of our hero!

In Goughs Sepulchral monuments, p. cviii. is "the figure of the stone over the grave of Robin Hood [in Kirklees park, being a plain stone with a sort of cross fleuree thereon] now broken and much defaced, the inscription illegible. That printed in Thoresby Ducat. Leod. 576, from Dr. Gale's papers was never on it.* The late sir Samuel Armitage,

* That this epitaph had been printed, or was well known, at least, long before the publication of Mr. Thoresbys book, if not before either he or Dr. Gale was born, appears from the "true tale of Robin Hood" by Martin Parker, written, if not printed, as early as 1631. (See volume I. p. 127.) That dates, about this period, were frequently by *ides* and *kalends*, see Madoxes *Formulare Anglicanum*, (Dissertation), p. xxx. Even Arabic figures are produced in some of still greater antiquity, see *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis*, ii. 331. Robert Grosthead bishop of Lincoln makes use of these figures about the year 1240. Astles *Origin of writing*, p. 188.

owner of the premises, caused the ground under it to be dug a yard deep, and found it had never been disturbed; so that is was probably brought from some other place, and by vulgar tradition ascribed to Robin Hood" (refers to "Mr. Watsons letter in Antiquary society minutes"). This is probably the tomb-stone of Elisabeth de Staynton, mentioned in the preceding note.

The old epitaph is, by some anonymous hand, in a work entitled "Sepulchrorum inscriptiones; or a curious collection of 900 of the most remarkable epitaphs." Westminster, 1727, (vol. ii. p. 73.) thus not inelegantly paraphrased:

"Here, underneath this little stone,
Thro' Death's assaults, now lieth one,
Known by the name of Robin Hood,
Who was a thief, and archer good;
Full thirteen years, and something more,
He robb'd the rich to feed the poor:
Therefore, his grave bedew with tears,
And offer for his soul your prayers."*

(W) "Various dramatic exhibitions."] The earlyest of these performances now extant is, "The playe of Robyn Hode, very proper to be played in Maye games," which is inserted in the appendix to this work, and may probably be as old as the 15th century. That a different play, however, on the same subject has formerly existed, seems pretty certain from a somewhat curious passage in "The famous chronicle of king Edward the first, sirnamed Edward Longshankes, &c." by George Peele, printed in 1593.

* In "The travels of Tom Thumb over England and Wales" [by Mr. Robert Dodsley], p. 106. is another though inferior version.

"Here, under this memorial stone,
Lies Robert earl of Huntingdon;
As he, no archer e'er was good,
And people call'd him Robin Hood:
Such outlaws as his men and he
Again may England never see."

"Lluellen . . . . . weele get the next daie from Brecknocke the booke of Robin Hood, the frier he shall instruct us in his cause, and weele even here . . . wander like irregulers up and down the wildernesse, ile be maister of misrule, ile be Robin Hood that once, cousin 'Rice', thou shalt be little John, and hers frier David, as fit as a die for frier Tucke. Now, my sweet Nel, if you will make up the messe with a good heart for maide Marian, and doe well with Lluellen under the green-woode trees, with as good a wil as in the good townes, why plena est curia.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter Mortimor, solus.

Mortimor . . . . . Maisters, have after gentle Robin Hood,
You are not so well accompanied I hope,
But if a potter come to plaie his part,
Youle give him stripes or welcome good or worse. [*Exit.*

Enter Lluellen, Meredith, frier, Elinor, and their traine. They are all clad in greene, &c. sing, &c. Blyth and bonny, the song ended, Lluellen speaketh.

Luellen. Why so, I see, my mates of olde,
All were not lies that Bedlams [beldams] told;
Of Robin Hood and little John,
Frier Tucke and maide Marian."

Mortimer, as a potter, afterwards fights the frier with "flailes."

2. "The downfall of Robert earle of Huntington, afterward called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde: with his love to chaste Matilda, the lord Fitzwaters daughter, afterwardes his faire maide Marian. Acted by the right honourable, the earle of Notingham, lord high admirall of England, his servants. ¶ Imprinted at London, for William Leake, 1601." 4to. b. l.

3. "The death of Robert, earle of Huntington, otherwise called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde: with the lamentable tragedie of chaste Matilda, his faire maid Marian, poysoned at Dunmowe, by king John. Acted, &c. ¶ Imprinted &c. [as above] 1601." 4to. b. l.

These two plays, usually called the first and second part of Robin Hood, were always, on the authority of Kirkman, falsely ascribed to Thomas Heywood, till Mr. Malone fortunately retrieved the names of the true authors, Anthony Mundy and Henry Chettle.* As they seem partly founded on traditions long since forgotten, and refer occasionally to documents not now to be found, at any rate, as they are much older than most of the common ballads upon the subject, and contain some curious and possibly authentic particulars not elsewhere to be met with, the reader will excuse the particularity of the account and length of the extracts here given.

The first part, or downfall of Robert earle of Huntington, is supposed to be performed at the court and command of Henry the 8th; the poet Skelton being the dramatist, and acting the part of chorus. The introductory scene commences thus:

" Enter sir John Eltam, and knocks at Skeltons doore.

Sir John. Howe, maister Skelton! what, at studie hard?
[*opens the doore.*

Skelt. Welcome and wisht for, honest sir John Eltam,—
Twill trouble you after your great affairs,
[i. e. *the surveying of certain maps which his majesty had employed him in;*

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* In "a large folio volume of accounts kept by Mr. Philip Henslowe, who appears to have been proprietor of the Rose theatre near the Bankside in Southwark," he has entered—

" Feb. 1597-8. " The first part of Robin Hood, by Anthony Mundy.
The second part of the downfall of earl Huntington, sirnamed Robinhood, by Anthony Mundy and Henry Chettle."

In a subsequent page is the following entry: "Lent unto Robarte Shawe, the 18 of Novemb. 1598, to lend unto Mr. Cheattle, upon the mending of the first part of Robart Hoode, the sum of xs." and afterwards —" For mending of Robin Hood for the corte." See Malones edition of " The plays and poems of William Shakspeare," 1790, vol. i. part II. (Emendations and additions.)

To take the paine that I intended to intreate you to,
About rehearsall of your promis'd play.
Elt. **Nay, master Skelton; for the king himselfe,**
As wee were parting, bid mee take great heede
Wee faile not of our day: therefore I pray
Sende for the rest, that now we may rehearse.
Skel. O they are readie all, and drest to play.
What part play you?
Elt. Why, I play little John,
And came of purpose with this greene sute.
Skel. Holla, my masters, little John is come.
[*At every doore all the players runne out; some crying* where? where? *others,* Welcome, sir John: *among other the boyes and clowne.*
Skel. Faith, little Tracy, you are somewhat forward.
What, our maid Marian leaping like a lad!
If you remember, Robin is your love,
Sir Thomas Mantle yonder, not sir John.
Clow. But, master, sir John is my fellowe, for I am Much the millers sonne. Am I not?
Skel. I know yee are sir:—
And, gentlemen, since you are thus prepar'd,
Goe in, and bring your dumbe scene on the stage,
And I, as prologue, purpose to expresse
The ground whereon our historie is laied. [*Exeunt, manet Skelton.*

Trumpets sounde, [1] *enter first king Richard with drum and auncient, giving Ely a purse and sceptre, his mother and brother John, Chester, Lester, Lacie, others at the kings appointment, doing reverence. The king goes in: presently Ely ascends the chaire, Chester, John, and the queene part displeasantly.* [2] *Enter* ROBERT, EARLE OF HUNTINGTON, *leading Marian; followes him Warman, and after Warman, the prior; Warman ever flattering and making curtsie, taking gifts of the prior behinde and his master before. Prince John enters, offereth to take Marian; Queen Elinor enters, offering to pull Robin from her; but they infolde each other, and sit downe within the curteines.* [3] *Warman with the prior, sir Hugh Lacy, lord Sentloe, and sir Gilbert Broghton folde hands, and drawing the curteins, all (but the prior) enter, and are kindely received by* Robin Hoode."

During the exhibition of the second part of the dumb-shew, Skelton instructs the audience as follows:

"This youth that leads yon virgin by the hand
Is our earle Robert, or your Robin Hoode,
That in those daies, was earle of Huntington;
The ill-fac't miser, brib'd in either hand,
Is Warman, once the steward of his house,

Who, Judas like, betraies his liberall lord,
Into the hands of that relentlesse prior,
Calde Gilbert Hoode, uncle to Huntington.
Those two that seeke to part these lovely friends,
Are Elenor the queene, and John the prince,
She loves earle Robert, he maide Marian,
But vainely; for their deare affect is such,
As only death can sunder their true loves.
Long had they lov'd, and now it is agreed,
This day they must be troth-plight, after wed:
At Huntingtons faire house a feast is helde,
But envie turnes it to a house of teares.
For those false guestes, conspiring with the prior;
To whom earle Robert greatly is in debt,
Meane at the banquet to betray the earle,
Unto a heavie writ of outlawry:
The manner and escape you all shall see.

. . . . . .

Looke to your entrance, get you in, sir John.
My shift is long, for I play frier Tucke;
Wherein, if Skelton hath but any lucke,
Heele thanke his hearers oft with many a ducke.
For many talk of Robin Hood that never shot in his bowe,
But Skelton writes of Robin Hood what he doth truly knowe."

After some Skeltonical rimes, and a scene betwixt the prior, the sherif, and justice Warman, concerning the outlawry, which appears to be proclaimed, and the taking of earl Huntington at dinner, "Enter Robin Hoode, little John following him; Robin having his napkin on his shoulder, as if hee were sodainly raised from dinner." He is in a violent rage at being outlawed, and Little John endeavours to pacify him. Marian being distressed at his apparent disorder, he dissembles with her. After she is gone, John thus addresses him:

"Now must your honour leave these mourning tunes,
And thus by my areede you shall provide;
Your plate and jewels 'i wil' straight packe up,
And toward Notingham convey them hence.
At Rowford, Sowtham, Wortley, Hothersfield,
Of all your cattell mony shall be made,
And I at Mansfield will attend your comming;
Where weele determine which wale's best to take.

Rob. Well, be it so; a gods name, let it be:
And if I can, Marian shall come with mee.
John. Else care will kill her; therefore if you please,
At th' utmost corner of the garden wall,
Soone in the evening waite for Marian,
And as I goe ile tell her of the place.
Your horses at the Bell shall readie bee,
I meane Belsavage,* whence, as citizens
That 'meane' to ride for pleasure some small way,
You shall set foorth."

The company now enters, and Robin charges them with the conspiracy, and rates their treacherous proceeding. Little John in attempting to remove the goods is set upon by Warman and the sherif; and during the fray "Enter prince John, Ely and the prior, and others." Little John tells the prince, he but defends the box containing his own gettings; upon which his royal highness observes,

"You do the fellow wrong; his goods are his:
You only must extend upon the earles.
Prior. That was, my lord, but nowe is Robert Hood,
A simple yeoman as his servants were."

Ely gives the prior his commission, with directions to make speed, lest "in his country-houses all his heards be solde;" and gives Warman a patent "for the high sheriffewick of Nottingham." After this, "Enter Robin like a citizen; and then the queen and Marian disguised for each other. Robin takes Marian, and leaves the queen to prince John, who is so much enraged at the deception that he breaks the head of Elys messenger. Sir Hugh, brother to lord Lacy, and stew-

* That is, the inn so called, upon Ludgate-hill. The modern sign, which however seems to have been the same 200 years ago, is a bell and a wild man; but the original is supposed to have been a beautiful Indian; and the inscription, La belle sauvage. Some, indeed, assert that the inn once belonged to a lady Arabella Savage; and others, that its name, originally The bell and savage, arose (like The George and blue boar) from the junction of two inns, with those respective signs. Non nostrûm est tantas componere lites.

ard to Ely, who had been deeply concerned in Huntingtons ruin is killed in a brawl, by prince John, whom Ely orders to be arrested; but the prince, producing letters from the king, revoking Elys appointment, " lifts up his drawne sworde" and " Exit, cum Lester and Lacy," in triumph. Then, " Enter Robin Hoode, Matilda, at one door, little John, and Much the millers sonne at another doore." After mutual congratulations, Robin asks if it be

> "——possible that Warmans spite
> Should stretch so farre, that he doth hunt the lives
> Of bonnie Scarlet, and his brother Scathlock.
> *Much.* O, I, sir. Warman came but yesterday to take charge of the jaile at Notingham, and this daie, he saies, he will hang the two outlawes. . . .
> *Rob.* Now, by my honours hope, . . .
> He is too blame: say, John, where must they die?
> *John.* Yonder's their mothers house, and here the tree,
> Whereon, poore men, they must forgoe their lives;
> And yonder comes a lazy lozell frier,
> That is appointed for their confessor,
> Who, when we brought your monie to their mothers,
> Was wishing her to patience for their deaths."

Here " Enter frier Tucke;" some conversation passes, and the frier skeltonizes; after which he departs, saying,

> "——let us goe our way,
> Unto this hanging businesse; would for mee
> Some rescue or repreeve might set them free.
> *Rob.* Heardst thou not, little John, the friers speach?
> *John.* He seemes like a good fellow, my good lord.
> *Rob.* He's a good fellowe, John, upon my word.
> Lend me thy horne, and get thee in to Much,
> And when I blowe this horne, come both and helpe mee.
> *John.* Take heed, my lord: the villane Warman knows you,
> And ten to one, he hath a writ against you.
> *Rob.* Fear not: below the bridge a poor blind man doth dwell,
> With him I will change my habit, and disguise,
> Only be readie when I call for yee,
> For I will save their lives, if it may bee. . . .

Enter Warman, Scarlet and Scathlock bounde, frier Tuck as their confessor, officers with halberts.

War. Master frier, be briefe, delay no time.
Scarlet and Scatlock, never hope for life;
Here is the place of execution,
And you must answer lawe for what is done.
Scar. Well, if there be no remedie, we must:
Though it ill seemeth, Warman, thou shouldst bee,
So bloodie to pursue our lives thus cruellie.
Scat. Our mother sav'd thee from the gallows, Warman,
His father did preferre thee to thy lord:
One mother had wee both, and both our fathers
To thee and to thy father were kinde friends. . . .
War. Ye were first outlawes, then ye proved theeves. . . .
Both of your fathers were good honest men;
Your mother lives their widowe in good fame:*
But you are scapethrifts, unthrifts, villanes, knaves,
And as ye liv'd by shifts, shall die with shame."

To them enters Ralph, the sherifs man, to acquaint him that the carnifex, or executor of the law, had fallen off his "curtall" and was "cripplefied" and rendered incapable of performing his office; so that the sherif was to become his deputy. The sherif insists that Ralph shall serve the turn, which he refuses. In the midst of the altercation, "Enter Robin Hoode, like an old man," who tells the sherif that the two outlaws had murdered his young son, and undone himself; so that for revenge sake he desires they may be delivered to him. They denying the charge, "Robin whispers with them," and with the sherifs leave, and his mans help, unbinds them: then, sounds his horn; and "Enter little John, Much . . . Fight; the frier, making as if he helpt the sheriffe, knockes down his men, crying, Keepe the kings peace. Sheriffe [perceiving that it is "the outlawed earle of Huntington"] runnes away, and his

* She is called the widow Scarlet; so that Scathlocke was the elder brother. In fact, however, it was mere ignorance in the author to suppose the Scathlocke and Scarlet of the story distinct persons, the latter name being an evident corruption of the former; Scathlock, Scadlock, Scarlock, Scarlet.

men." (See the ballad of "Robin Hood rescuing the widows sons," part II. num. xxiii.)

" *Fri.* Farewell, earle Robert, as I am true frier,
I had rather be thy clarke, then serve the prior.
Rob. A jolly fellowe! Scarlet, knowest thou him?
Scar. Hee is of Yorke, and of Saint Maries cloister;
There where your greedie uncle is lord prior. . . .
Rob. Here is no biding, masters; get yee in. . . .
John, on a sodaine thus I am resolv'd.
To keepe in Sherewoodde tille the kings returne,
And being outlawed, leade an outlawes life. . . .
John. I like your honours purpose exceeding well.
Rob. Nay, no more honour, I pray thee, little John;
Henceforth I will be called Robin Hoode,
Matilda shall be my maid Marian."

Then follows a scene betwixt old Fitzwater and prince John, in the course of which the prince, as a reason to induce Fitzwater to recall his daughter Matilda, tells him that she is living in an adulterous state, for that

"—Huntington is excommunicate,
And till his debts be paid, by Romes decree,
It is agreed, absolv'd he cannot be;
And that can never be.—So never wife," &c.

Fitzwater, on this, flies into a passion, and accuses the prince of being already marryed to "earle Chepstowes daughter." They "fight; John falles." Then enter the queen, &c. and John sentences Fitzwater to banishment: after which, "Enter Scathlocke and Scarlet, winding their hornes, at severall doores. To them enter Robin Hoode, Matilda, all in greene, . . . Much, little John; all the men with bowes and arrowes.*

* In "The booke of the inventary of the goods of my lord admeralles men tacken the 10 of Marche in the yeare 1598," are the following properties for Robin Hood and his retinue, in this identical play:

" *Item*, ... i green gown for Maryan.
Item, vi grene cottes for Roben Hoode, and iiii knaves sewtes.
Item, i hatte for Robin Hoode, i hobihorse.
Item, Roben Hoodes sewtte.
Item, the fryers trusse in Roben Hoode."
Malones *Shak.* II. ii. (Emen. & ad.)

. . . . . .

Rob. Wind once more, jolly huntsmen, all your horns,
Whose shrill sound, with the ecchoing wods assist,
Shall ring a sad knell for the fearefull deere,
Before our feathered shafts, deaths winged darts,
Bring sodaine summons for their fatall ends.
Scar. Its ful seaven years since we were outlawed first,
And wealthy Sherewood was our heritage:
For all those yeares we raigned uncontrolde,
From Barnsdale shrogs to Notinghams red cliffes.
At Blithe and Tickhill were we welcome guests:
Good George a Greene at Bradford was our friend,
And wanton Wakefields pinner lov'd us well.*
At Barnsley dwels a potter, tough and strong,
That never brookt we brethren should have wrong.
The nunnes of Farnsfield (pretty nunnes they bee)
Gave napkins, shirts, and bands to him and mee.
Bateman of Kendall gave us Kendall greene;
And Sharpe of Leedes sharpe arrows for us made.
At Rotherham dwelt our bowyer, god him blisse,
Jackson he hight, his bowes did never misse.
This for our goode, our scathe let Scathlocke tell,
In merry Mansfield how it once befell.
Scath. In merry Mansfield, on a wrestling day,
Prizes there were, and yeomen came to play,
My brother Scarlet and myselfe were twaine;
Many resisted, but it was in vaine,
For of them all we wonne the mastery,
And the gilt wreathes were given to him and me.
There by sir Doncaster of 'Hothersfield,'
We were bewraied, beset, and forst to yield;
And so borne bound, from thence to Notingham,
Where we lay doom'd to death till Warman came.

Some cordial expressions pass between Robin and Matilda. He commands all the yeomen to be cheerful; and orders little John to read the articles.

" *Joh.* First, no man must presume to call our master,
By name of earle, lorde, baron, knight, or squire:
But simply by the name of Robin Hoode.——
That faire Matilda henceforth change her name,
'And' by maid Marians name, be only cald.

* George a Greene and Wakefields pinner, were one and the same person. The shoemaker of Bradford is anonymous.

Thirdly, no yeoman following Robin Hoode
In Sherewod, shall use widowe, wife, or maid,
But by true labour, lustfull thoughts expell.
Fourthly, no passenger with whom ye meete,
Shall yee let passe till hee with Robin feaste:
Except a poast, a carrier, or such folke,
As use with foode to serve the market townes.
Fiftly, you never shall the poore man wrong.
Nor spare a priest, a usurer, or a clarke.
Lastly, you shall defend with all your power
Maids, widowes, orphants, and distressed men.
All. All these we vowe to keepe, as we are men.
Rob. Then wend ye to the greenewod merrily,
And let the light roes bootlesse from yee runne,
Marian and I, as soveraigns of your toyles,
Will wait, within our bower, your bent bowes spoiles.
[*Exeunt winding their hornes.*"

In the next scene, we find frier Tucke feignedly entering into a conspiracy with the prior and sir Doncaster, to serve an execution on Robin, in disguise. Jinny, the widow Scarlets daughter, coming in, on her way to Sherwood, is persuaded by the frier to accompany him, "disguised in habit like a pedlers mort." Fitzwater enters like an old man: —sees Robin sleeping on a green bank, Marian strewing flowers on him; pretends to be blind and hungry, and is regaled by them. In answer to a question why the fair Matilda (Fitzwaters daughter) had changed her name, Robin tells him it is

"Because she lives a spotlesse maiden life:
And shall, till Robins outlawe life have ende.
That he may lawfully take her to wife;
Which, if king Richard come, will not be long."

"Enter frier Tucke and Jinny like pedlers singing," and afterward "Sir Doncaster and others weaponed."—The frier discovers the plot, and a fray ensues. The scene then changes to the court, where the prior is informed of six of his barns being destroyed by fire, and of the different execrations of all

ranks upon him, as the undoer of "the good lord Robert, earle of Huntington;" that the convent of St. Marys had elected "Olde father Jerome" prior in his place; and lastly a herald brings his sentence of banishment, which is confirmed by the entrance of the prior. Lester brings an account of the imprisonment of his gallant sovereign, king Richard, by the duke of Austria, and requires his ransom so be sent. He then introduces a description of his matchless valour in the holy land. John not only refuses the ransom-money, but usurps the stile of king: upon which Lester grows furious, and rates the whole company. The following is part of the dialogue:

"*Joh.* (*to Lester*) Darest thou attempt thus proudly in our sight?
Lest. What is't a subject dares, that I dare not?
Sals. Dare subjects dare, their soveraigne being by?
Lest. O god, that my true soveraigne were ny!
Qu. Lester, he is.
Lest. Madam, by god, you ly.
Chest. Unmanner'd man.
Lest. A plague of reverence!"

After this, and more on the same subject, the scene returns to the forest; where Ely, being taken by Much, "like a countryman with a basket," is examined and detected by Robin, who promises him protection and service. On their departure:

"*Joh.* Skelton, a worde or two beside the play.
Fri. Now, sir John Eltam, what ist you would say.
John. Methinks I see no jeasts of Robin Hoode,
No merry morices of frier Tuck,
No pleasant skippings up and downe the wodde,
No hunting songs, no coursing of the bucke:
Pray god this play of ours may have good lucke,
And the king's majestie mislike it not!
Fri. And if he doe, what can we doe to that?
I promis'd him a play of Robin Hoode,
His honorable life, in merry Sherewod;
His majestie himselfe survaid the plot,

And bad me boldly writte it, it was good.
For merry jeasts, they have bene showne before:
As how the frier fell into the well,
For love of Jinny, that faire bonny bell:
How Greeneleafe rob'd the shrieve of Notingham,
And other mirthful matter, full of game."

"Enter Warman banished." He laments his fall, and applies to a cousin, on whom he had bestowed large possessions, for relief; but receives nothing, except reproaches for his treachery to his noble master. The jailor of Nottingham, who was indebted to him for his place, refuses him even a scrap of his dogs meat, and reviles him in the severest terms. Good-wife Tomson, whose husband he had delivered from death, to his great joy, promises him a caudle, but fetches him a halter;* in which he is about to hang himself, but is prevented by Fitzwater, and some of Robin Hoods men, who crack a number of jokes upon him: Robin puts an end to their mockery, and proffers him comfort and favour. Then enters frier Tucke, with an account of sir Doncaster and the prior being striped and wounded in their way to Bawtrey: Robin, out of love to his uncle, hastens to the place. After this, "Enter prince John, solus, in green, bowe and arrowes.

John. Why this is somewhat like, now may I sing,
As did the Wakefield pinder in his note;
At Michaelmas commeth my covenant out,
My master gives me my fee:
Then Robin lle weare thy Kendall greene,
And wend to the greenewodde with thee."†

* Which, by the way, was termed a *kempen caudle*. See the *second part of K. H. VI.* act 4, scene 7. Lord-chancellor Jeffries, at the revolution, was treated much in the same manner. One day, during his confinement in the tower, he received a barrel of oysters, upon which he observed to his keeper, "Well, you see, I have yet some friends left:" at the bottom of the barrel, however, he found a halter: which changed his countenance, and is even thought to have hastened his death.

† See the ballad of "The jolly pinder of Wakefield," Part II. Num. III.

He assumes the name of Woodnet, and is detected by Scathlocke and frier Tucke. The prince and Scathlocke fight, Scathelocke grows weary, and the frier takes his place. Marian enters, and perceiving the frier, parts the combatants. Robin enters, and John submits to him. Much enters, running, with information of the approach of "the king and twelve and twenty score of horses." Robin places his people in order. The trumpets sound, the king and his train enter, a general pardon ensues, and the king confirms the love of Robin and Matilda. Thus the play concludes, Skelton promising the second part, and acquainting the audience of what it should consist.

The second part, or death of Robert earle of Huntington, is a pursuit of the same story. The scene, so far as our hero is concerned, lyes in Sherwood. A few extracts may not be unacceptable.

"Sc. iiii. Winde hornes. Enter king, queene, &c. Frier Tuck carrying a stags head, dauncing." The frier has been sent for to read the following inscription upon a copper ring round the stags neck:

> "When Harold Hare-foote raigned king,
> About my necke he put this ring."

The king orders "head, ring and all" to be sent to Nottingham castle, to be kept for monuments. Fitzwater tells him, he has heard "an olde tale,"

> "That Harold, being Goodwins sonne of Kent,*
> Hunted for pleasure once within this wood,
> And singled out a faire and stately stagge,
> Which, foote to foote, the king in running caught;
> And sure this was the stagge.
> *King.* It was no doubt.

* Fitzwater confounds one man with another; Harold Harefoot was the son and successor of Canute the great.

Chester. But some, my lord, affirme,
That Julius Cæsar, many years before,
Tooke such a stagge, and such a poesie writ:"*

Upon which his majesty very sagaciously remarks,

" It should not be in Julius Cæsars time:
There was no English used in this land
Untill the Saxons came, and this is writ
In Saxon characters."

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* This tradition is referred to, and the inscription given in Rays Itineraries, 1760, p. 153.—" We rode through a bushet or common called Rodwell-hake, two miles from Leeds, where (according to the vulgar tradition) was once found a stag, with a ring of brass about its neck, having this inscription:

When Julius Cæsar here was king,
About my neck he put this ring:
Whosoever doth me take,
Let me go for Cæsar's sake."

In The midwife, or Old woman's magazine, (vol. i. p. 250.) Mrs. Midnight, in a letter " To the venerable society of antiquarians," containing a description of Cæsars camp, on Windsor forest, has the following passage: " There have been many extraordinary things discovered about this camp. One thing, I particularly remember, was a deer of about sixteen hundred years old . . . . . This deer it seems was a favourite of Cæsar's and on that account he bedecked her neck with a golden collar and an inscription, which I shall by and by take notice of; she had been frequently taken, but when the hunters, the peasants and poor people saw the golden collar on her neck, they readily let her go again. However, as she continually increased in strength and in bulk, as well as in age, after the course of about fifteen or sixteen centuries, the flesh and skin were entirely grown over this collar, so that it could not be discover'd till after she was kill'd, and then to the surprize of the virtuosi, it appear'd with this inscription:

When Julius Cæsar reigned here,
Then was I a little deer;
If any man should me take,
Let me go for Cæsar's sake.

" This collar, which is of pure gold, I am told weighs thirty ounces, and as the blood of the creature still appears fresh upon it, I believe it may be as valuable as any of your gimcracks; however, there will be no harm in my sending of it to you; and if I can procure it, you may depend on my taking the utmost care of it." As no notice is announced of this wonderful piece of antiquity in the voluminous and important lucubrations of the above learned body, it most probably never came

The next quotation may be of service to Dr. Percy, who has been pleased to question our heros nobility, because "the most ancient poems make no mention of this earldom," and the old legend expressly asserts him "to have been a yeoman." It is very true; and we shall here not only find his title established, but also discover the secret of his not being usually distinguished or designed by it.

into their possession; which is very much to be lamented, as it would have been an admirable companion for *Hardecnutes chamber-pot*, *King Edward the firsts finger*, and other similar curiosities.

Juvenal des Ursins gravely relates that in the year 1380, a hart was takeën at Senlis, with a chain about his neck, inscribed "*Cæsar hoc me donavit.*"*

Upton, to be even with him, supposes a hart to have been taken at Bagshot near Windsor, with a motto on the collar in the French language, which proves the ancient Romans were familiar therewith long before it existed:

"*Julius Cæsar, quant jeo fus* petis,
Cest coler suz mon col ad mys."†

This *dictator perpetuo*, in fact, seems to have collared every hart he took. The family of *Pompei* in Italy use two harts for their supporters, on whose collars were the letters N. M. T. in memory of one, on whose collar were these words: "*Nemo Me Tangat, Cæsaris sum.*" Anstis, II. 113.

The original of all these stories is to be found in Pliny, who says: "It is generally held and confessed that the stagge or hind live long: for an hundred yeer after Alexander the great, some were taken with golden collars about their necks, overgrowne now with haire and growne within the skin: which collars the said king had done upon them." Naturall historie, (by Holland), 1601. (B. 8. c. 32.) Pausanias, moreover, speaking of one Leocydas, who fought for the Megalopolitans, in conjunction with Lydiades, against the Lacedæmonians (about the year 243 before Christ), says he was reported to be the descendant in the ninth degree of that Arcesilaus, who living in Lycosura saw that stag which is sacred to the goddess Despoine worn out with old age. This stag, he adds, had a collar on its neck with the following inscription:

Caught young, when Agapenor sail'd for Troy.

By which, he concludes, it is evident, that a stag lives much longer than an elephant. (B. 8, c. 10.)

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* Histoire de Charles VI. † Upton, de re militari, p. 119.

" *Enter Roben Hoode.*

King. How now, earle Robert!
Fri. A forfet, a forfet, my liege lord,
My masters lawes are on record,
The court-roll here your grace may see.
King. I pray thee, frier, read them mee.
Fri. One shall suffice, and this is hee.
No man that commeth in this wod,
To feast or dwell with Robin Hood.
Shall call him earle, lord, knight, or squire,
He no such titles doth desire,
But Robin Hood, plain Robin Hoode,
That honest yeoman, stout and good,
On paine of forfetting a marke,
That must be paid to mee his clarke.
My liege, my liege, this lawe you broke,
Almost in the last word you spoke;
That crime may not acquitted bee,
Till frier Tuck receive his fee."

Now, the reason that " the most ancient poems make no mention of this earldom," and the old legend expressly asserts him " to have been a yeoman," appears, plainly enough, to be, that as, pursuant to his own injunction, he was never called, either by his followers, or in the vicinity, by any other name than Robin Hood, so particularly the minstrels, who were always, no doubt, welcome to Sherwood,* and liberally entertained by him and his yeomanry, would take special care never to offend against the above law: which puts an end to the dispute. Q. E. D.

Our hero is, at length, poisoned by a drink which Doncaster and the prior, his uncle, had prepared for him to give

* Robin, in the old legend, expresses his regard for this order of men (concerning which the reader may consult an ingenious " Essay" in the Reliques of ancient English poetry, (vol. I.) and some " Observations" in a collection of ancient songs, printed in 1790):

" Whether he be messengere,
Or a man that myrthes can,
Or yf he be a pore man,
Of my good he shall have some."

to the king. His departing scene, and last dying speech are beautiful and pathetic.

" *Rob.* Inough, inough, Fitzwater, take your child.
My dying frost, which no sunnes heat can thawe,
Closes the powers of all my outward parts;
My freezing blood runnes back unto my heart,
Where it assists death, which it would resist:
Only my love a little hinders death,
For he beholds her eyes, and cannot smite.

. . . . . .

Mat. O let mee looke for ever in thy eyes,
And lay my warme breath to thy bloodlesse lips,
If my sight can restraine deaths tyrannies,
Or keep lives breath within thy bosome lockt."

He desires to be buryed

" At Wakefield, underneath the abbey-wall;

directs the manner of his funeral; and bids his yeomen,

" For holy dirges, sing 'him' wodmens songs."

The king, upon the earls death, expresses his sorrow for the tragical event; ratifies the will; repeats the directions for the funeral; and says,

" Fall to your wod-songs, therefore, yeomen bold,
And deck his herse with flowers, that lov'd you deere."

The whole concludes with the following solemne dirge:

" Weepe, weepe, ye wod-men waile,
Your hands with sorrow wring;
Your master Robin Hood lies deade,
Therefore sigh as you sing.

Here lies his primer, and his beades,
His bent bowe, and his arrowes keene,
His good sworde and his holy crosse:
Now cast on flowers fresh and greene.

And, as they fall, shed teares and say,
Well a, well a day, well a, well a day!
Thus cast yee flowers and sing,
And on to Wakefield take your way."

The poet then prosecutes the legend of Matilda, who is finally poisoned, by the procurement of king John, in Dunmow-priory.

The story of this lady, whom the author of these plays is supposed to have been the first that converted into the character of maid Marian, or connected in any shape with the history of Robin Hood, is thus related by Stow, under the year 1213: "The chronicle of Dunmow sayth, this discord arose betwixt the king and his barons, because of Mawd called the faire, daughter to Robert Fitzwalter, whome the king loved, but her father would not consent; and thereupon ensued warre throughout England ..... Whilst Mawd the faire remayned at Dunmow, there came a messenger unto her from king John about his suite in love, but because she would not agree, the messenger poysoned a boyled or potched egge against she was hungrie, whereof she died." (Annales, 1592). Two of Draytons heroical epistles pass between king John and Matilda. He has also written her legend.

4. "Robin Hood's penn'orths, by Wm. Haughton."*

5. "Metropolis coronata, the triumphs of ancient drapery: or, rich cloathing of England, in a second yeeres performance. In honour of the advancement of sir John Jolles, knight, to the high office of lord maior of London, and taking his oath for the same authoritie, on Monday being the 30. day of October, 1615. Performed in heartie affection to him, and at the bountifull charges of his worthy brethren the truely honourable society of drapers, the first that received such dignitie, in this citie. Devised and written by A. M. [Anthony Mundy] citizen and draper of London." 1615. 4to.

* This play is entered in master Henslows account-book with the date of Dccember 1600. See Malones Shakspeare, Vol. II. Part II. (Emen. & ad.)

This is one of the pageants formerly usual on Lord-mayors-day, and of which several are extant, written as well by our author Mundy,* as by Middleton, Dekker, Heywood, and other hackney dramatists of that period. They were thought of such consequence that the city had for some time (though probably not till after the restoration) a professed laureat for their composition; an office which expired with Elkanah Settle in 1723-4. They consisted chiefly of machinery, allegorical or historical personages, songs and speeches.

"After all these shewes, thus ordered in their appointed places, followeth another device of huntsmen, all clad in greene, with their bowes, arrowes and bugles, and a new slaine deere, carried among them. It savoureth of earle Robert de la Hude, sometime the noble earle of Huntington, and sonne in law (by marriage) to old Fitz-Alwine,† raised by the muses all-commanding power, to honour this triumph with his father. During the time of his out-lawed life in the forest of merry Shirwood, and elsewhere, while the cruel oppression of a most unnatural and covetous brother hung heavy upon him, Gilbert de la Hude lord abbot of Christall [r. Kirkstall] abbey, who had all or most of his lands in mortgage: he was commonly called Robin Hood, and had a gallant company of men (out-lawed in the like manner) that followed his downecast fortunes; as little John, Scathlocke

?

* "The triumphes of reunited Britannia. A pageant in honour of sir Leonard Holliday lord mayor." 1605.

† Henry Fitz-Alwine Fitz-Liefstane, gold-smith, first mayor of London, was appointed to that office by K. Richard I. in 1189, and continued therein till the 15th of K. John, 1212, when he "deceased, and was buried in the priorie of the holy trinitie, neare unto Aldgate." (Stows Survay, 1598. p. 418.) His relationship with Robin Hood is merely poetical, and invented by Mundy "for the nonce;" though it is by no means improbable that they were acquainted, and that our hero might have occasionally dined at the mansion-house on a lord mayors day.

Much the millers son, Right-hitting Brand, fryar Tuck, and many more. In which condition of life we make instant use of him, and part of his brave bowmen, fitted with bowes and arrowes, of the like strength and length, as good records deliver testimonie, were then used by them in their killing of deere. . . . . .

Afterward, [viz. after "Fitz-Alwines speech to the lord maior at night,"] as occasion best presenteth itselfe, when the heate of all other employments are calmly overpast, earle Robin Hood, with fryer Tuck, and his other brave huntesmen, attending (now at last) to discharge their duty to my lord, which the busie turmoile of the whole day could not before affoord: they shewe themselves to him in this order, and earle Robin himselfe thus speaketh.

The speech spoken by earl Robert de la Hude, commonly called Robin Hood.

Since graves may not their dead containe,
Nor in their peacefull sleepes remaine,
But triumphes and great showes must use them,
And we unable to refuse them;
It joyes me that earle Robert Hood,
Fetcht from the forrest of merrie Shirwood,
With these my yeomen tight and tall,
Brave huntsmen and good archers all,
Must in this joviall day partake,
Prepared for your honours sake.
No sooner was I rayse from rest,
And of my former state possest
As while I liv'd, but being alone,
And of my yeomen seeing not one,
I with my bugle gave a call,
Made all the woods to ring withall.
Immediately came little John,
And Scathlock followed him anon,
With Much the honest millers sonne;
And ere ought else could be done,
The frollicke frier came tripping in,
His heart upon a merrie pinne.

Master (quoth he) in yonder brake,
A deere is hid for Marians sake,
Bid Scathlock, John, or honest Brand,
That hath the happy hitting hand,
Shoote right and have him: and see, my lord,
The deed performed with the word.
For Robin and his bow-men bold,
Religiously did ever holde,
Not emptie-handed to be seene,
Were't but at feasting on a greene;
Much more then, when so high a day
Calls our attendance: all we may
Is all too little, tis your grace
To winke at weakenesse in this case:
So, fearing to be over-long,
End all with our old hunting song.

. . . . . .

The song of Robin Hood and his huntes-men.

Now wend we together, my merry men all,
Unto the forrest side a;
And there to strike a buck or a doae,
Let our cunning all be tride a.

Then goe we merrily, merrily on,
To the green-wood to take up our stand [a],
Where we will lye in waite for our game,
With our best bowes all in our hand [a].

What life is there like to bold Robin Hood?
It is so pleasant a thing a:
In merry Shirwood he spends his dayes,
As pleasantly as a king a.

No man may compare with bold Robin Hood,
With Robin Hood, Scathlocke and John [a]:
Their like was never, nor never will be,
If in case that they were gone [a].

They will not away from merry Shirwood,
In any place else to dwell [a]:
For there is neither city nor towne,
That likes them half so well [a].

Our lives are wholly given to hunt,
And haunt the merry greene-wood [a];
Where our best service is daily spent,
For our master Robin Hood [a]."

6. " Robin Hood and his pastoral May games." 1624.

7. " Robin Hood and his crew of soldiers." 1627.

These two titles are inserted among the plays mentioned by Chetwood in his British theatre, (p. 67.) as written by anonymous authors in the 16th century to the restoration. But neither Langbaine, who mentions both, nor any other person, pretends to have ever seen either of them. The former, indeed, may possibly be " The playe of Robyn Hode," already noticed; and the other is probably a future article. Langbaine, it is to be observed, gives no date to either piece; so that, it may be fairly concluded, those above specifyed are of Chetwoods own invention, which appears to have been abundantly fertile in every species of forgery and imposture.

8. " The sad shepherd, or a tale of Robin Hood."

The story of our renowned archer cannot be said to have been wholely occupyed by bards without a name; since, not to mention Mundy or Drayton, the celebrated Ben Jonson intended a pastoral drama on this subject, under the above title; but dying, in the year 1637, before it was finished, little more than the two first acts has descended down to us. His last editor (Mr. Whalley), while he regrets that it is but a fragment, speaks of it in raptures, and, indeed, not without evident reason, many passages being eminently poetical and judicious.

" The persons of the play," so far as concerns our immediate purpose, are: [1] " Robin Hood, the chief woodman [i. e. forester], master of the feast. [2] Marian, his lady, the mistress. [3] Friar Tuck, the chaplain and steward. [4] Little John, bow-bearer. [5, 6] Scarlet, Scathlocke,* two

* Jonson was led into this mistake by the old play of Robin Hood. See before, p. lxiv.

brothers, huntsmen. [7] George a Green, huisher of the bower. [8] Much, Robin Hoods bailiff or acater." The rest are, the guests invited, the witch of Paplewick, her daughter, the swin'ard her son, Puck Hairy or Robin Goodfellow their hind, and lastly a devout hermit. "The scene, Sherwood, consisting of a landscape of a forest, hills, valleys, cottages, a castle, a river, pastures, herds, flocks, all full of country simplicity; Robin Hoods bower, his well, &c." "The argument of the first act" is as follows: "Robin Hood, having invited all the shepherds and shepherdesses of the vale of Be'voir to a feast in the forest of Sherwood, and trusting to his mistress, maid Marian, with her woodmen, to kill him venison against the day; having left the like charge with friar Tuck his chaplain and steward, to command the rest of his merry men to see the bower made ready, and all things in order for the entertainment: 'meets' with his guests at their entrance into the wood, and conducts them to his bower: where, by the way, he receives the relation of the sad shepherd Æglamour, who is fallen into a deep melancholy for the loss of his beloved Earine, reported to have been drowned in passing over the Trent, some few days before . . . . In the mean time Marian is come from hunting . . . . Robin Hood enquires if she hunted the deere at force, and what sport he made? how long he stood? and what head he bore? all which is briefly answered, with a relation of breaking him up, and the raven, and her bone. The suspect had of that raven to be Maudlin the witch of Paplewick, whom one of the huntsmen met i' the morning at the rouzing of the deer, and is confirmed by her being then in Robin Hoods kitchen, i' the chimney corner, broiling the same bit which was thrown to the raven at the quarry or fall of the deer. Marian, being gone in to shew the deer to some

of the shepherdesses, returns discontented; sends away the venison she had killed to her they call the witch; quarrels with her love Robin Hood, abuseth him, and his guests the shepherds; and so departs, leaving them all in wonder and perplexity."

By "the argument of the second act" it appears that the witch had "taken the shape of Marian to abuse Robin Hood, and perplex his guests." However, upon an explanation of the matter with the true Marian, the trick is found out, the venison recovered, and "Robin Hood dispatcheth out his woodmen to hunt and take her: which ends the act." The third act was designed to be taken up with the chace of the witch, her various schemes to elude the pursuers, and the discovery of Earine in the swineherds enchanted oak. Nothing more of the authors design appearing, we have only to regret the imperfect state of a pastoral drama, which, according to the above learned and ingenious editor, would have done honour to the nation.*

9. "Robin Hood and his crew of souldiers, a comedy acted at Nottingham on the day of his saCRed majesties corronation. Vivat rex. The actors names: Robin Hood, commander; Little John, William Scadlocke, souldiers; messenger from the sheriffe. London, printed for James Davis, 1661." 4to.

This is an interlude, of a few pages and no merit; alluding to the late rebellion, and the subject of the day. The outlaws, convinced by the reasoning of the sherifs messenger, become loyal subjects.

* This play appears to have been performed upon the stage after the restoration. The prologue and epilogue (spoken by Mr. Portlock) are to be found in num. 1009 of the Sloane MSS. It was republished, with a continuation and notes, by Mr. Waldron, of Drury-lane theatre, in 1783.

10. "Robin Hood. An opera, as it is perform'd at Lee's and Harpers great theatrical booth in Bartholomew-fair." 1730. 8vo.

11. "Robin Hood." 1751. 8vo.

This was a ballad-farce, acted at Drury-lane theatre; in which the following favourite song was originally sung by Mr. Beard, in the character of Robin Hood.

As blithe as the linnet sings in the green wood,
So blithe we'll wake the morn;
And through the wide forest of merry Sherwood
We'll wind the bugle horn.

The sheriff attempts to take bold Robin Hood,
Bold Robin disdains to fly;
Let him come when he will, we'll, in merry Sherwood,
Or vanquish, boys, or die.

Our hearts they are stout, and our bows they are good,
As well their masters know;
They're cull'd in the forest of merry Sherwood,
And never will spare a foe.

Our arrows shall drink of the fallow deer's blood,
We'll hunt them all o'er the plain;
And through the wide forest of merry Sherwood,
No shaft shall fly in vain.

Brave Scarlet, and John, who ne'er were subdu'd,
Give each his hand so bold;
We'll range through the forest of merry Sherwood,
What say my hearts of gold?

12. "Robin Hood; or, Sherwood forest: a comic opera. As "performed at the theatre-royal in Covent-garden. By Leonard Mac Nally, esq." 1784. 8vo.

This otherwise insignificant performance was embellished with some fine music by Mr. Shield. It has been since reduced to, and is still frequently acted as, an after-piece.

A drama on the subject of Robin Hood, under the title of The foresters, has been long expected from the elegant author

of The school for scandal. The first act, said to have been written many years ago, is, by those who have seen or heard it, spoken of with admiration.*

(X)—" innumerable poems, rimes, songs and ballads."] The original and most ancient pieces of this nature have all perished in the lapse of time, during a period of between five and six hundred years continuance; and all we now know of them is that such things once existed. In the Vision of Pierce Plowman, an allegorical poem, thought to have been composed soon after the year 1360, and generally ascribed to Robert Langeland, the author introduces an ignorant, idle and drunken secular priest, the representative, no doubt, of the parochial clergy of that age, in the character of Sloth, who makes the following confession:

> " I cannot parfitli mi paternoster, as the preist it singeth,
> But I can ryms of Roben Hode, and ' Randolf ' erl of Chester,
> But of our lorde or our lady I lerne nothyng at all." †

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* A most stupid pantomime on this subject, under the title of " Merry Sherwood, or Harlequin, forester," was performed in December, 1795, at the theatre-royal, Covent-garden.

† 1st edit. 1550, fo. xxvi, b. (Randolf is misprinted Rand of.) Subsequent editions, even of the same year, reading only " Randall of Chester." Mr. Warton (History of English poetry, ii. 179.) makes this genius, whom he calls a frier, say " that he is well acquainted with the rimes of Randall of Chester;" and these rimes he, whimsically enough, conjectures to be the old Chester Whitsun plays; which, upon very idle and nonsensical evidence, he supposes to have been written by Randal Higden, the compiler of the Polychronicon. Of course, if this absurd idea were at all founded, the rimes of Robin Hood must likewise allude to certain Yorkshire or Nottinghamshire plays, written by himself. The " Randolf erl of Chester " here meant is Randal Blundevile, the last earl of that name, who had been in the holy land, was a great warrior and patriot, and dyed in 1231.

The reading of the original edition is confirmed by a very old manuscript, in the Cotton library, (Vespasian, B. XVI.) differing considerably from the printed copies, which gives the passage thus:

Fordun, the Scotish historian, who wrote about 1340, speaking of Robin Hood and Little John, and their accomplices, says, "of whom the foolish vulgar in comedies and tragedies make lewd entertainment, and are delighted to hear the jesters and minstrels sing them above all other ballads:"* and Mair (or Major), whose history was published by himself in 1521, observes that "The exploits of this Robert are celebrated in songs throughout all Britain."† So, likewise, maister Johne Bellendene, the translator of "that noble clerk maister Hector Boece" (Bois or Boethius), having mentioned "that waithman Robert Hode with his fallow litil Johne," adds, "of quhom ar mony fabillis and mery sportis soung amang the vulgar pepyll."‡ Whatever may have been the

"I can nouzt perfiitli my pater-noster as a prest it syngeth:
I can rymes of Robyn Hood, of Rondolf erl of Chestre,
Ac of oure lorde ne of oure ladi the leste that ever was maked."

(See also Caligula, A. XI.)

The speaker himself could have told Mr. Warton he was no frier:

"I have ben prieste & person passynge thyrty winter,
Yet can I nether solfe, ne singe, ne sayntes lyves read;
But I can find in a fielde or in a furlong an hare,
Better than in Beatus vir or in Beati omnes
Construe one clause well, & kenne it to my parishens."

* "De quibus stolidum vigus hianter in comœdiis & tragœdiis prurienter festum faciunt, & super ceteras 'romancias mimos & bardanos cantitare delectantur." Scotichronicon (à Hearne), p. 774. Comedies and tragedies are—not dramatic compositions, but—poems of a comic or serious cast. Romance in Spanish, and romance in French, signify—not a tale of chivalry, but—a vulgar ballad, at this day.

† "Rebus hujus Roberti gestis tota Britannia in cantibus utitur." Majoris Britanniæ historia, Edin. 1740. p. 128.

‡ Hystory of Scotland, Edin. 1541. fo. The word "waithman" was probably suggested by Andrew of Wyntown (see before, note (B.) It seems equivalent to the English vagabond, or, perhaps, outlaw. Waith is waif; and it is to be remembered that, in the technical language of the

nature of the compositions alluded to by the above writers, several of the pieces printed in the present collection are unquestionably of great antiquity; not less, that is, than between three and four hundred years old. The Lytell geste, which is first inserted, is probably the oldest thing upon the subject we now possess;* but a legend, apparently of the same species, was once extant, of, perhaps, a still earlyer date, of which it is some little satisfaction to be able to give even the following fragment, from a single leaf, fortunately preserved in one of the volumes of old printed ballads in the British museum, in a hand-writing as old as Henry the 6ths time. It exhibits the characters of our hero and his *fidus Achates* in the noblest point of view.

" He sayd Robyn Hod . . . . yne the preson,
And owght off hit was gon.

The porter rose a-non certeyn,
As sone as he hard Johan call;
Lytyll Johan was redy with a sword,
And bare hym throw to the wall.

Now will I be jayler, sayd lytyll Johan,
And toke the keys in hond;
He toke the way to Robyn Hod,
And sone he hyme unbond.

He gaffe hym a good swerd in his hond,
His hed ther-with for to kepe;

English courts, a woman is said to be waived, and not outlawed. " In our auld Scottish langage," says Skene, " ane *Vothman* is ane out-law, or ane fugitive fra the lawes." (*De verborum significatione*, Edin. 1597) It is from þæðan, *venari*, *fugare*. See Lyes Dictionary. The passage above quoted does not occur in Boises original work.

* Of this poem there have been, at least, five editions at London or Westminster, and one at Edinburgh. In a list of " bookes printed, and . . . sold by Jane Bell, at the east end of Christ-church [1655]," in company with Frier Rush, The frier and the boy, &c. is " a book of Robin Hood and Little John." Captain Cox of Coventry appears to have had a copy of some old edition: see Lanehams Letter from Killingworth, 1575.

And ther as the wallis wer lowest,
Anon down ther they lepe.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
To Robyn . . . . . sayd:

I have d*one* the a god torne for an . .
Quit me when thow may;
I have done the a gode torne, sayd lytyll [Johan],
Forsothe as I the saye;

I have browghte the under the gren wod . . .
Farewell & have gode daye.

Nay, be my trowthe, sayd Robyn,
So schall it never bee;
I make the master, sayd Robyn,
Off all my men & me.
Nay, be my trowthe, sayd lytyll Johan,
So schall it never bee."

This, indeed, may be part of the "story of Robin Hood and little John," which M. Wilhelm Bedwell found in the ancient MS. lent him by his much honoured good friend M. G. Withers, whence he extracted and published "The turnament of Tottenham," a poem of the same age, and which seemed to him to be done (perhaps but transcribed) by sir Gilbert Pilkington, formerly, as some had thought, parson of that parish.*

That poems and stories on the subject of our hero and his companions were extraordinarily popular and common before and during the sixteenth century is evident from the testimony of divers writers. Thus, Alexander Barclay, priest, in his translation of The shyp of folys, printed by Pynson in 1508, and by John Cawood in 1570,† says:

* "Description of the town of Tottenham-high-crosse, &c." London, (1631, 4to.) 1781, 8vo. The invaluable MS. alluded to has been since discovered; and the entire poem, of which Mr. Ritson has here given a fragment, will be found in the *Appendix*. Ed.

† The book, under the same title, printed by Wynken de Worde, in 1517, is a different translation in prose.

"I write no jeste ne tale of Robin Hood."

Again:

"For goodlie scripture is not worth an hawe,
But tales are loved ground of ribaudry;
And many are so blinded with their foly,
That no scriptur thinke they so true nor gode,
As is a foolish jest of Robin Hode."

Again:

"And of all fables and jestes of Robin Hood,
Or other trifles."

The same Barclay, in the fourth of his Egloges, subjoined to the last edition of The ship of foles, but originally printed soon after 1500, has the following passage:

"Yet would I gladly heare some mery fit
Of maide Marion, or els of Robin Hood,
Or Benteleyes ale, which chafeth well the blood,
Of Perte of Norwich, or Sauce of Wilberton,
Or buckishe Joly * well stuffed as a ton."

Robert Braham, in his epistle to the reader, prefixed to Lydgates Troy-book, 1555, is of opinion that "Caxtons recueil" [of Troy] is "worthye to be numbred amongest the trifelinge tales and barrayne luerdries of Robyn Hode and Bevys of Hampton." (See Ames's Typographical antiquities, by Herbert, p. 849.)

"For one that is sand blynd," says sir Thomas Chaloner, "woulde take an asse for a moyle, or another prayse a rime of Robyn Hode for as excellent a making as Troylus of Chaucer, yet shoulde they not straight-waies be counted madde therefore? (Erasmus's Praise of folye, sig. h.)

"If good lyfe," observes bishop Latimer, "do not insue and folowe upon our readinge to the example of other, we myghte as well spende that tyme in reading of prophane hys-

* Mr. Warton reads *Toby*; and so, perhaps, it may be in former editions.

tories, of Canterburye tales, or a fit of Roben Hode." (Sermons, sig. A. iiii.)

The following lines, from a poem in the Hyndford MS. compiled in 1568, afford an additional proof of our heros popularity in Scotland:

> "Thair is no story that I of heir,
> Of Johne nor Robene Hude,
> Nor zit of Wallace wicht but weir,
> That me thinkes half so gude,
> As of thre palmaris, &c."

That the subject was not forgotten in the succeeding age, can be testifyed by Drayton, who is elsewhere quoted, and in his sixth eclogue makes Gorbo thus address "old Winken de Word:"

> "Come, sit we down under this hawthorn-tree,
> The morrows light shall lend us day enough,
> And let us tell of Gawen, or sir Guy,
> Of Robin Hood, or of old Clem a Clough."

Richard Johnson, who wrote "The history of Tom Thumbe," in prose, (London, 1621, 12mo. b. l.) thus prefaces his work: "My merry muse begets no tales of Guy of Warwicke, &c. nor will I trouble my penne with the pleasant glee of Robin Hood, little John, the fryer, and his Marian; nor will I call to mind the lusty Pinder of Wakefield, &c."

In "The Calidonian forrest," a sort of allegorical or mystic tale, by John Hepwith, gentleman, printed in 1641, 4to. the author says,

> "Let us talke of Robin Hoode,
> And little John in merry Shirewoode, &c."*

* Honest Barnaby, i. e. Richard Brathwayte, who wrote or travelled about 1640, was well acquainted with our heros story.

> "Veni Nottingham tyrones
> Sherwoodenses sunt latrones,

Of one very ancient, and undoubtedly once very popular, song this single line is all that is now known to exist:

"Robin Hood in Barnsdale stood."

However, though but a line, it is of the highest authority in Westminster-hall, where, in order to the decision of a knotty point, it has been repeatedly cited, in the most solemn manner, by grave and learned judges.

M. 6 Jac. B. R. Witham v. Barker. Yelv. 147. Trespass, for breaking plaintifs close, &c. Plea, Liberum tenementum of sir John Tyndall, and justification as his servant and by his command. Replication, That it is true it is his freehold, but that long before the time when &c. he leased to plaintif at will, who entered and was possessed until, &c. traversing, that defendant entered, &c. by command of sir John. Demurrer: and adjudged against plaintif, on the ground of the

> **Instar Robin Hood, & servi**
> **Scarlet & Joannis Parvi;**
> **Passim, sparsim, peculantur,**
> **Cellis, sylvis deprædantur.**
>
> **"Thence to Nottingham, where rovers,**
> **Highway riders, Sherwood drovers,**
> **Like old Robin Hood, and Scarlet,**
> **Or like Little John his varlet;**
> **Here and there they shew them doughty,**
> **In cells and woods to get their booty."**

Whitlock relates that "the [parliament] committee who carried the propositions of peace to Oxford, had the kings answer sealed up and sent to them. They, upon advice together, thought it not fit for them to receive an answer in that manner... and made an address to his majesty, that they might know what his answer was, and have a copy of it: to which his majesty replied, What is that to you, who are but to carry what I send, and if I will send the song of *Robin Hood and Little John*, you must carry it? To which the commissioners only said, that the business about which they came was of somewhat more consequence than that song." (*Memorials*, p. 115.)

replication being bad, as not setting forth any seisin or possession in sir John, out of which a lease at will could be derived. For a title made by the plea or replication should be certain to all intents, because it is traversable. Here, therefor, he should have stated sir Johns seisin, as well as the lease at will; which is not done here: " mes tout un come il ust replie Robin Whood in Barnwood stood, absque hoc q̄ dct. p̄ commandement sir John. Quod nota. Per Fenner, Williams et Crook justices sole en court. Et judgment done accordant. Yelv. p̄ dct."

In the case of Bush v. Leake, B. R. Trin. 23 G. 3. Buller, justice, cited the case of Coulthurst v. Coulthurst, C. B. Pasch. 12 G. 3. (an action on bond) and observed " There, a case in Yelverton was alluded to, where the court said, you might as well say, by way of inducement to a traverse, Robin Hood in Barnwood stood."

It is almost unnecessary to observe, because it will be shortly proved, that Barnwood, in the preceding quotations, ought to be Barnsdale.* With respect to Whood, the reader will see, under note (P), a remarkable proof of the antiquity

* There is, in fact, such a place as Barnwood forest, in Buckinghamshire; but no one, except Mr. Hearne, has hitherto supposed that part of the country to have been frequented by our hero. Barnwood, in the case reported by Yelverton, has clearly arisen from a confusion of Barnsdale and green wood. " Robin Hood in the greenwood stood" was likewise the beginning of an old song now lost (see vol. ii. p. 49): and it is not a little remarkable that Jefferies, serjeant, on the trial of Pilkington and others, for a riot, in 1683, by a similar confusion, quotes the line in question thus:

" Robin Hood upon Greendale stood." (State-trials, iii. 634.)

A third corruption has taken place in Parker, p. 131. (King v. Cotton,) though expressly cited from Yelverton; viz.

" Robin Hood in Barnwell stood."

The following most vulgar and indecent rime, current among the pea-

of that pronunciation, which actually prevails in the metropolis at this day. See also the word "whodes in note (EE). So, likewise, Bale, in his *Actes of English votaries*, 1560, says, "the monkes had their cowles, caprones or whodes;" and in Stows *Survay*, 1598, p. 120, have "a fooles whoode."

This celebrated and important line occurs as the first of a foolish mock-song, inserted in an old morality, intitled "A new interlude and a mery of the nature of the iiii elementes," supposed to have been printed by John Rastall about 1520; where it is thus introduced:

"*Hu*[*manyte*]. —— let us some lusty balet syng.
Yng[*norance*]. Nay, syr, by the hevyn kyng:
For me thynkyth it servyth for no thyng,
All suche pevysh prykeryd song.
Hu. Pes, man, pryk-song may not be dyspysyd,
For therwith god is well plesyd.
. . . . . .
Yng. Is god well pleasyd, trowest thou, therby?
Nay, nay, for there is no reason why.
For is it not as good to say playnly
Gyf me a spade,
As gyf me a spa ve va ve va ve vade?
But yf thou wylt have a song that is good,
I have one of Robyn Hode,
The best that ever was made.
Hu. Then a feleshyp, let us here it.
Yng. But there is a bordon, thou must bere it,
Or ellys it wyll not be.
Hu. Than begyn, and care not for . . .

Downe downe downe, &c.

---

santry in the north of England, may have been intended to ridicule the perpetual repetition of "Robin Hood in greenwood stood:"

Robin Hood
In green-wood stood,
With his back against a tree;
He fell flat
Into a cow-plat,
And all besh—n was he.

Yng. **Robyn Hode in Barnysdale stode,**
And lent hym tyl a mapyll thystyll;
Than cam our lady & swete saynt Andrewe:
Slepyst thou, wakyst thou, Geffrey Coke? *

A c. wynter the water was depe,
I can not tell you how brode;
He toke a gose nek in his hande,
And over the water he went.

He start up to a thystell top,
And cut hym downe a holyn clobbe;
He stroke the wren betwene the hornys,
That fyre sprange out of the pygges tayle.

Jak boy is thy bow i-broke,
Or hath any man done the wryguldy wrange?
He plukkyd muskyllys out of a wyllowe,
And put them in to his sachell.

Wylkyn was an archer good,
And well coude handell a spade;
He toke his bend bowe in his hand,
And set him downe by the fyre.

He toke with hym lx. bowes and ten,
A pese of befe, another of baken.
Of all the byrdes in mery Englond,
So merely pypys the mery botell."

"The lives, stories, and giftes of men which are contained in the bible, they [the papists] read as thinges no more pertaining unto them than a tale of Robin Hood." Tyndale, Prologue to the prophecy of Jonas, about 1531.

Gwalter Lynne, printer, in his dedication to Ann, duchess of Somerset, of "The true beliefe in Christ and his sacramentes," 1550, says, "I woulde wyshe tharfore that al men, women, and chyldren, would read it. Not as they haue bene

* It is possible that, amid these absurdities, there may be other lines of the old song of Robin Hood, which is the only reason for reviving them.

"O sleepst thou, or wakst thou, Jeffery Cooke?"

occurs, likewise, in a medley of a similar description, in Pammelia, 1609.

here tofore accustomed to reade the fained storyes of Robinhode, Clem of the Cloughe, wyth such lyke to passe the tyme wythal, &c."

In 1562, John Alde had license to print "a ballad of Robyn god," a mistake, it is probable, for Robyn Hod.

Alexander Hume, minister of Logie, about 1599, says, in one of his "Hymnes or sacred songs," printed in that year, that

> ——— "much to blame are those of carnal brood,
> Who loath to taste of intellectual food,
> Yet surfeit on old tales of Robin Hood."

Complaint of Scotland. Edin. 1801, Dissertation, p. 221.

> "Exclude the scriptures, and bid them read the story
> Of Robin Hood and Guy, which was both tall and stout,
> And Bevis of Southampton, to seek the matter out.
> Suffer all slander against god and his truth,
> And praise the old fashion in king Arthur's days,
> Of abbays and monasteries how it is great ruth
> To have them plucked down, and so the eldest says;
> And how it was merry when Robin Hoods plays
> Was in every town, the morrice and the fool,
> The maypole and the drum, to bring the calf from school,
> With Midge, Madge and Marion, about the pole to dance,
> And Stephen, that tall stripling, to lead Volans dance,
> With roguing Gangweeke, a goodly remembrance,
> With beads in every hand, our prayers stood by tale:
> This was a merry work, talk among our meany,
> And then of good eggs ye might have twenty for a penny."

L. Ramseys Practice of the divell. b. l.

All the entire poems and songs known to be extant will be found in the following collection; but many more may be traditionally preserved in different parts of the country which would have added considerably to its value.* That

* In "*Heraclitus ridens*, or a discourse between Jest and Earnest," a periodical paper, against the whigs, published in 1681, and collected and republished in 1713, (No. 34) Jest begins singing:

> "Bills, bows, and axes, quoth Robin Hood,
> But I have not time to tell;

some of these identical pieces, or others of the like nature, were great favourites with the common people in the time of queen Elizabeth, though not much esteemed, it would seem, by the refined critic, may, in addition to the testimonies already cited, be infered from a passage in Webbes Discourse of English poetrie, printed in 1586. "If I lette passe," says he, "the unaccountable rabble of ryming ballet-makers, and compylers of sencelesse sonets, who be most busy to stuffe every stall full of grosse devises and unlearned pamphlets, I trust I shall with the best sort be held excused.

Yonder's the sheriff and his company,
But I hope all will be well.
Hei, down, derry, derry, down:

and says, "I hope I may sing of old Robin without offending a grand jury, or being presented for disuniting protestants."

In The gentleman's magazine for December, 1790, is the first verse of a song used by the inhabitants of Helston in Cornwall, on the celebration of an annual festivity on the eighth of May, called the Furry-day, supposed Floras day, not, it is imagined, "as many have thought, in remembrance of some festival instituted in honour of that goddess, but rather from the garlands commonly worn on that day." (See the same publication for June and October, 1790.) This verse was the whole that Mr. Urbans correspondent could then recollect, but he thought he might be afterward able "to send all that is known of it, for," he says, "it formerly was very long, but is now much forgotten." The stanza is as follows:

"Robin Hood and Little John
They are both gone to fair O;
And we will go to the merry green-wood,
To see what they do there O.
With hel an tow,
And rum-be-low,
And chearily we'll get up,
As soon as any day O,
All for to bring the summer home,
The summer and the May O."

"After which," he adds, "there is something about the grey goose wing; from all which," he concludes, "the goddess Flora has nothing to say to it." She may have nothing to say to the song, indeed, and yet a good deal to do with the thing. But the fact is, that the first eight days of

For though many such can frame an alehouse-song of five or sixe score verses, hobbling uppon some tune of a northern jygge, or Robyn Hoode, or La lubber, &c. and perhappes observe just number of sillables, eyght in one line, sixe in an other, and therewithall an A to make a jercke in the ende, yet if these might be accounted poets (as it is sayde some of them make meanes to be promoted to the lawrell) surely we shall shortly have whole swarmes of poets; and every one that can frame a booke in ryme, though, for want of matter, it be but in commendations of copper noses, or bottle ale, wyll catch at the garlande due to poets: whose potticall

May, or the first day and the eighth, seem to have been devoted by the Celtic nations to some great religious ceremony. Certain superstitious observances of this period still exist in the highlands of Scotland, where it is called the Bel-tein; Beltan, in that country, being a common term for the beginning of May, as "between the Beltans" is a saying significant of the first and eighth days of that month. The games of Robin Hood, as we shall elsewhere see, were, for whatever reason, always celebrated in May.—N. B. "Hel-an-tow," in the above stanza, should be heave and how. Heave and how, and Rumbelow, was an ordinary chorus to old ballads; and is at least as ancient as the reign of Edward II. since it occurs in the stanza of a Scotish song, preserved by some of our old historians, on the battle of Bannock-burn.

To lengthen this long note: Among the Harleian MSS. (num. 367.) is the fragment of "a tale of Robin Hood dialonge-wise beetweene Watt and Jeffry. The morall is the overthrowe of the abbyes; the like being attempted by the Puritane, which is the wolfe, and the politician, which is the fox, agaynst the bushops. Robin Hood, bushop; Adam Bell, abbot; Little John, colleauges of the university." This seems to have been a common mode of satyrizing both the old church and the reformers. In another MS. of the same collection, (N. 207) written about 1532, is a tract entitled "The banckett of John the reve, unto Peirs Ploughman, Laurens Laborer, Thomlyn Tailyor, and Hobb of the Hille, with others:" being, as Mr. Wanley says, a dispute concerning transubstantiation by a Roman catholic. The other, indeed, is much more modern: it alludes to the indolence of the abbots, and their falling off from the original purity in which they were placed by the bishops, whom it inclines to praise. The object of its satire seems to be the Puritans; but here it is imperfect, though the lines preserved are not wholly destitute of poetical merit.—"Robin Hood and the duke of Lancaster, a ballad, to the tune of The abbot of Canterbury," 1727, is a satire on sir Robert Walpole.

(poeticall, I should say) heades, I woulde wyshe, at their worshipfull comencements, might, in steede of lawrell, be gorgiously garnished with fayre greene barley, in token of their good affection to our Englishe malt." The chief object of this satire seems to be William Elderton, the drunken ballad-maker, of whose compositions all but one or two have unfortunately perished.*

Most of the songs inserted in the second of these volumes were common broad-sheet ballads, printed in the black letter, with wood cuts, between the restoration and the revolution; though copies of some few have been found of an earlyer date. "Who was the author of the collection, intitled Robin Hood's garland, no one," says sir John Hawkins, "has yet pretended to guess. As some of the songs have in them more of the spirit of poetry than others, it is probable," he thinks, "it is the work of various hands: that it has from time to time been varied and adapted to the phrase of the times," he says, "is certain." None of these songs, it is be-

* Chatterton, in his "Memoirs of a sad dog," represents "baron Otranto" (meaning, the honorable Horace Walpole, now earl of Orford) when on a visit to "sir Stentor," as highly pleased with Robin Hoods ramble, "melodiously chaunted by the knight's groom and dairy-maid, to the excellent music of a two-stringed violin and bag-pipe," which transported him back "to the age of his favourite hero, Richard the third;" whereas, says he, "the songs of Robin Hood were not in being till the reign of queen Elizabeth." This, indeed, may be in a great measure true of those which we now have, but there is sufficient evidence of the existence and popularity of such-like songs for ages preceding; and some of these, no doubt, were occasionally modernised or new-written, though most of them must be allowed to have perished.

The late Dr. Johnson, in controverting the authenticity of Fingal, a composition in which the author, Mr. Macpherson, has made great use of some unquestionably ancient Irish ballads, said, "He would undertake to write an epick poem on the story of Robin Hood, and half England, to whom the names and places he should mention in it are familliar, would believe and declare they had heard it from their earliest years." (Boswells Journal, p. 486.)

lieved, were collected into a garland till after the restoration; as the earliest that has been met with, a copy of which is in the possession of Francis Douce, esq. was printed by W. Thackeray, a noted ballad-monger, in 1670. This, however, contains no more than sixteen songs, some of which, very falsely as it seems, are said to have been "never before printed." "The latest edition of any worth," according to sir John Hawkins, "is that of 1719." None of the old editions of this garland have any sort of preface: that prefixed to the modern ones, of Bow or Aldermary church-yard, being taken from the collection of old ballads, 1723, where it is placed at the head of Robin Hoods birth and breeding. The full title of the last London edition of any note is—"Robin Hood's garland: being a complete history of all the notable and merry exploits performed by him and his men on many occasions: To which is added a preface, [i.e. the one already mentioned] giving a more full and particular account of his birth, &c. than any hitherto published. [Cut of archers shooting at a target.]

I'll send this arrow from my bow,
And in a wager will be bound
To hit the mark aright, although
It were for fifteen hundred pound.
Doubt not I'll make the wager good,
Or ne'er believe bold Robin Hood.

Adorned with twenty-seven neat and curious cuts adapted to the subject of each song. London, Printed and sold by R. Marshall, in Aldermary church-yard, Bow-lane." 12mo. On the back of the title-page is the following Grub-street address:

"To all gentlemen archers."

"This garland has been long out of repair,
Some songs being wanting, of which we give account;
For now at last, by true industrious care,
The sixteen songs to twenty-seven we mount;

Which large addition needs must please, I know,
All the ingenious 'yeomen' of the bow.
To read how Robin Hood and Little John,
Brave Scarlet, Stutely, valiant, bold and free,
Each of them bravely, fairly play'd the man,
While they did reign beneath the green-wood tree;
Bishops, friars, likewise many more,
Parted with their gold, for to increase their store,
But never would they rob or wrong the poor."

The last seven lines are not by the author of the first six, but were added afterward; perhaps when the twenty-four songs were increased to twenty-seven.*

(Y)—" has given rise to divers proverbs:"] Proverbs, in all countries, are, generally speaking, of very great antiquity; and therfor it will not be contended that those concerning our hero are the oldest we have. It is highly probable, however, that they originated in or near his own time, and of course have existed for upward of 500 years, which is no

* The following note is inserted in the fourth edition of the Reliques of ancient English poetry, published in July 1795 (vol. I. p. xcvii):

" Of the 24 songs in what is now called " Robin Hood's garland," many are so modern as not to be found in Pepy's collection completed only in 1700. In the [editors] folio MS. are ancient fragments of the following, viz.—Robin Hood and the beggar.—Robin Hood and the butcher.—Robin Hood and fryer Tucke.—Robin Hood and the pindar.—Robin Hood and queen Catharine, in two parts.—Little John and the four beggars, and " Robine Hood his death." This last, which is very curious, has no resemblance to any that have yet been published; [it is probably num. XXVIII. of part II.] and the others are extremely different from the printed copies; but they unfortunately are in the beginning of the MS. where half of every leaf hath been torn away."

As this MS. " contains several songs relating to the civil war in the last century," the mere circumstance of its comprising fragments of the above ballads is no proof of a higher antiquity; any more than its not containing " one that alludes to the restoration" proves its having been compiled before that period; or than, because some of these 24 songs are not to be found in Pepys's collection, they are more modern than 1700. If the MS. could be collated, it would probably turn out that many of its contents have been inaccurately and unfaithfully transcribed, by some illiterate person, from printed copies still extant, and, consequently, that it is, so far, of no authority. See the advertisement prefixed.

modern date. They are here arranged, not, perhaps, according to their exact chronological order, but by the age of the authorities they are taken from.

1. Good even, good Robin Hood.

The allusion is to civility extorted by fear. It is preserved by Skelton, in that most biting satire, against cardinal Wolsey, Why come ye not to court? (Works, 1736, p. 147.)

> "He is set so hye,
> In his hierarchy,
> . . . . . .
> That in the chambre of stars
> All matters there he mars;
> Clapping his rod on the borde,
> No man dare speake a word;
> For he hath all the saying,
> Without any renaying:
> He rolleth in his recordes,
> He saith, How say ye my lordes?
> Is not my reason good?
> Good even, good Robin Hood."*

2. Many men talk of Robin Hood that never shot in his bow.

"That is, many discourse (or prate rather) of matters wherein they have no skill or experience. This proverb is now extended all over England, though originally of Nottinghamshire extraction, where Robin Hood did principally reside in Sherwood forrest. He was an arch robber, and withal an excellent archer; though surely the poet† gives a twang to the loose of his arrow, making him shoot one a cloth-yard long, at full forty score mark, for compass never

* Mr. Warton has mistaken and misprinted this line so as to make it absolute nonsense.

> "Is not my reason good?
> Good---even good---Robin Hood."
>
> (His. En. po. vol. ii.)

† Draytons Poly-Olbion, song 26, p. 122. (Supra p. xli.)

higher than the breast, and within less than a foot of the mark. But herein our author hath verified the proverb, talking at large of Robin Hood, in whose bow he never shot. Fullers Worthies, p. 315.

One may justly wonder," adds the facetious writer, "this archer did not at last hit the mark, I mean, come to the gallows for his many robberies."

The proverb is mentioned, and given as above, by sir Edward Coke in his 3d Institute, p. 197. See also note (W). It is thus noticed by Jonson, in "The king's entertainment at Welbeck in Nottinghamshire, 1633:"

"This is....father Fitz-Ale, herald of Derby, &c.
He can fly o'er hills and dales,
And report you more odd tales
Of our out law Robin Hood,
That revell'd here in Sherewood,
And more stories of him show,
(Though he ne'er shot in his bow)
Than an' men or believe, or know.

We likewise meet with it in Epigrams, &c. 1654:

"In Virtutem.

"Vertue we praise, but practice not her good,
(Athenian-like) we act not what we know;
So many men doe talk of Robin Hood,
Who never yet shot arrow in his bow."

On the back of a ballad, in Anthony a Woods collection, he has written,

"There be some that prate
Of Robin Hood, and of his bow,
Which never shot therein, I trow."

Ray gives it thus:

"Many talk of Robin Hood, that never shot in his bow,
And many talk of little John, that never did him know:"

which Kelly has varyed, but without authority.

Camdens printer has separated the lines, as distinct proverbs (Remains, 1674):

"Many speak of Robin Hood that never shot in his bow.
"Many a man talks of little John that never did him know."

This proverb likewise occurs in The downfall of Robert earle of Huntington, 1600, and is alluded to in a scarce and curious old tract intitled "The contention betwyxte Churchyeard and Camell, upon David Dycers Dreame &c." 1560. 4to. b. l.

"Your sodain stormes and thundre claps, your boasts and braggs so loude:
Hath doone no harme thogh Robin Hood spake with you in a cloud.
Go learne againe of litell Jhon, to shute in Robyn Hods bowe,
Or Dicars dreame shall be unhit, and all his whens, I trowe."*

The Italians appear to have a similar saying.

Molti parlan di Orlando
Chi non viddero mai suo brando.

3. To overshoot Robin Hood.

"And lastly and chiefly, they cry out with open mouth as if they had overshot Robin Hood, that Plato banished them [i. e. poets] out of his commonwealth." Sir P. Sidneys Defence of poesie.

4. Tales of Robin Hood are good [enough] for fools.

This proverb is inserted in Camdens Remains, printed originally in 1605; but the word in brackets is supplyed from Ray.

5. To sell Robin Hoods pennyworths.

* In Churchyards "Replication onto Camels objection," he tells the latter:

"Your knowledge is great, your judgement is good,
The most of your study hath ben of Robyn Hood;
And Bevys of Hampton, and syr Launcelot de Lake,
Hath taught you full oft your verses to make."

" It is spoken of things sold under half their value; or if you will, half sold half given. Robin Hood came lightly by his ware, and lightly parted therewith; so that he could afford the length of his bow for a yard of velvet. Whithersoever he came, he carried a fair along with him; chapmen crowding to buy his stollen commodities. But seeing The receiver is as bad as the thief, and such buyers are as bad as receivers, the cheap pennyworths of plundered goods may in fine prove dear enough to their consciences." Fullers Worthies, p. 315.

This saying is alluded to in the old north-country song of Randal a Barnaby:

> " All men said, it became me well,
> And Robin Hoods pennyworths I did sell."

6. Come, turn about, Robin Hood.

Implying that to challenge or defy our hero must have been the ne plus ultra of courage. It occurs in Wit and drollery, 1661.

> " Oh Love, whose power and might,
> No creature ere withstood,
> Thou forcest me to write,
> Come turn about Robin-hood."

7. As crook'd as Robin Hoods bow.

That is, we are to conceive, when bent by himself. The following stanza of a modern Irish song is the only authority for this proverb that has been met with.

> " The next with whom I did engage,
> It was an old woman worn with age,
> Her teeth were like tobacco pegs,
> Besides she had two bandy legs,
> Her back more crook'd than Robin Hoods bow,
> Purblind and decrepid, unable to go;
> Altho' her years were sixty three,
> She smil'd at the humours of Soosthe Bue."

8. To go round by Robin Hoods barn.

This saying, which now first appears in print, is used to imply the going of a short distance by a circuitous method, or the farthest way about.

(Z)—" to swear by him, or some of his companions, appears to have been a usual practice."] The earlyest instance of this practice occurs in a pleasant story among " Certaine merry tales of the mad-men of Gottam," compiled in the reign of Henry VIII. by Dr. Andrew Borde, an eminent physician of that period, which here follows verbatim, as taken from an old edition in black letter, without date, (in the Bodleian library,) being the first tale in the book.

"There was two men of Gottam, and the one of them was going to the market at Nottingham to buy sheepe, and the other came from the market; and both met together upon Nottingham bridge. Well met, said the one to the other. Whither be yee going? said he that came from Nottingham. Marry, said he that was going thither, I goe to the market to buy sheepe. Buy sheepe! said the other, and which way wilt thou bring them home? Marry, said the other, I will bring them over this bridge. By Robin Hood, said he that came from Nottingham, but thou shalt not. By maid Marrion, said he that was going thitherward, but I will. Thou shalt not, said the one. I will, said the other. Ter here! said the one. Shue there! said the other. Then they beate their staves against the ground, one against the other, as there had beene an hundred sheepe betwixt them. Hold in, said the one. Beware the leaping over the bridge of my sheepe, said the other. I care not, said the other. They shall not come this way, said the one. But they shall, said the other. Then said the other, & if that thou make much to doe, I will put my finger in thy mouth. A turd thou wilt, said the other.

And as they were at their contention, another man of Gottam came from the market, with a sacke of meale upon a horse, and seeing and hearing his neighbours at strife for sheepe, and none betwixt them, said, Ah fooles, will you never learn wit? Helpe me, said he that had the meale, and lay my sack upon my shoulder. They did so; and he went to the one side of the bridge, and unloosed the mouth of the sacke, and did shake out all his meale into the river. Now, neighbours, said the man, how much meale is there in my sacke now? Marry, there is none at all, said they. Now, by my faith, said he, even as much wit is in your two heads, to strive for that thing you have not. Which was the wisest of all these three persons, judge you."*

" By the bare scalp of Robin Hoods fat frier,"

is an oath put by Shakspeare into the mouth of one of his outlaws in the Two gentlemen of Verona, act 4. scene 1. " Robin Hoods fat frier," is frier Tuck; a circumstance of which doctor Johnson, who set about explaining that author with a very inadequate stock of information, was perfectly ignorant.

(AA)—" his songs have been prefered not only, on the most solemn occasion, to the psalms of David, but in fact to the new testament."] "[On Friday, March 9th. 1733] was executed at Northampton William Alcock for the murder of his wife. He never own'd the fact, nor was at all concern'd at his approaching death, refusing the prayers and assistance

* See the original story, in which two brothers, of whom one had wished for as many oxen as he saw stars, the other for a pasture as wide as the firmament, kill each other about the pasturage of the oxen, (from Camer. oper. subscis. cent. 1. c. 92. p. 429) in Wanleys Little world of man, edition of 1774, p. 426. Camerarius, it seems, had the story from Scardeonius *de claris civibus Patavinis*; whence it is also related in the notes to Upton *de studio militari*; and an older, of the like kind, is in the Facetiæ of Poggius.

of any persons. In the morning he drank more than was sufficient, yet sent and paid for a pint of wine, which being deny'd him, he would not enter the cart before he had his money return'd. On his way to the gallows he sung part of an old song of Robin Hood, with the chorus, Derry, derry, down,* &c. and swore, kick'd and spurn'd at every person that laid hold of the cart; and before he was turn'd off, took off his shoes, to avoid a well known proverb; and being told by a person in the cart with him, it was more proper for him to read, or hear some body read to him, than so vilely to swear and sing, he struck the book out of the persons hands, and went on damning the spectators, and calling for wine. Whilst psalms and prayers were performing at the tree, he did little but talk to one or other, desiring some to remember him, others to drink to his good journey; and to the last moment declared the injustice of his case." (Gentleman's magazine, volume III. page 154.)

To this may be added, that at Edinburgh, in 1565, "Sandy Stevin menstrall" [i.e. musician] was convinced of blasphemy, alledging, That he would give no moir credit to The new testament, then to a tale of Robin Hood, except it wer confirmed be the doctours of the church." (Knox's Historie of the reformation in Scotland. Edin. 1732, p. 368.)

William Roy, in a bitter satire against cardinal Wolsey, intitled, "Rede me and be nott wrothe For I saye nothynge but trothe," printed abroad, about 1525, speaking of the bishops, says,—

* "Derry down is the burden of the old songs of the Druids sung by their Bards and Vaids, to call the people to their religious assemblys in the groves. Doire in Irish (the old Punic) is a grove: corrupted into derry. A famous Druid grove and academy at the place since called Londonderry from thence." MS. note by Dr. Stukely, in his copy of Robin Hoods garland. "Paul, Paul, thou art beside thyself!"

" Their frantyke foly is so pevisshe,
That they contempne in Englisshe,
To have the new testament;
But as for tales of Robyn Hode,
With wother jestes nether honest nor goode,
They have none impediment."

To the same effect is the following passage in another old libel upon the priests, intitled " I playne Piers which can not flatter, a plowe-man men me call, &c." b. l. n. d. printed in the original as prose:

" No Christen booke
Maye thou on looke,
Yf thou be an Englishe strunt,
Thus dothe alyens us loutte,
By that ye spreade aboute,
After that old sorte and wonte.
You allowe they saye,
Legenda aurea,
Roben Hoode, Bevys, & Gower,
And all bagage be syd,
But gods word ye may not abyde,
These lyese are your churche 'dower.'"

See, also, before, p. lxxxv.*

So, in Laurence Ramseys *Practise of the divell*, (n. d. 4to. b. l.)

" Exclude the scriptures, and byd them reade the storie
Of Robin Hood, and Guye, which was both tall and stout,
And Bevis of Southampton, to seeke the matter out."

(BB) " His service to the word of god."] " I came once myselfe," says bishop Latimer, (in his sixth sermon before

* Mr. Boyd, the famous preacher in Childsdale, finding that several of his hearers went away after the forenoon sermon, had this expression in his afternoon prayers: " Now, lord, thou seest that many people go away from hearing thy word; but had we told them stories of Robin Hood, or Davie Lindsay, they had stayed; and yet none of these are near so good as thy word that I preach." Scotch presbyterian eloquence, 1714, p. 156.

king Edward VI.) "to a place, riding on a jorney homeward from London, and I sent worde over night into the towne that I would preach there in the morning, bicause it was a holy day, and methought it was an holydayes worke. The churche stode in my way; and I tooke my horse and my company and went thither (I thought I should have found a great companye in the churche), and when I came there, the churche dore was faste locked. I taried there half an hower and more; at last the keye was founde; and one of the parishe commes to me, and sayes, Sir, this is a busie day with us, we cannot heare you; it is Robin Hoodes daye. The parishe are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hoode, I pray you let them not. I was fayne there to geve place to Robin Hoode. I thought my rochet shoulde have bene regarded, thoughe I were not; but it woulde not serve, it was fayne to geve place to Robin Hoodes men.

"It is no laughying matter, my frendes, it is a weepyng matter, a heavy matter, under the pretence for gatherynge for Robin Hoode, a traytour* and a theefe, to put out a preacher, to have his office lesse esteemed, to preferre Robin Hoode before the ministration of gods worde, and all this hath come of unpreaching prelates. Thys realme hath bene ill provided for, that it hath had suche corrupte judgementes in it, to preferre Robin Hoode to gods worde. If the bishoppes had bene preachers, there shoulde never have bene any such thing, &c."

(CC)—"may be called the patron of archery."] The bow and arrow makers, in particular, have always held his memory

* The bishop grows scurrilous. "I never heard," says Coke, attorney-general, "that Robin Hood was a traitor, they say he was an outlaw." (State trials, i. 218.—Raleigh had said, "Is it not strange for me to make myself a Robin Hood, a Kett, or a Cade?")

in the utmost reverence. Thus, in the old ballad of Londons ordinary:

"The hosiers will dine at the Leg,
The drapers at the sign of the Brush,
The fletchers to Robin Hood will go,
And the spendthrift to Beggars-bush."*

The picture of our hero is yet a common sign in the country, and, before hanging-signs were abolished in London, must have been still more so in the city; there being at present no less than a dozen alleys, courts, lanes, &c. to which he or it has given a name. (See Baldwins New complete guide, 1770.) The Robin-Hood-society, a club or assembly for public debate, or school for oratory, is well known. It was held at a public house, which had once borne the sign, and still retained the name of this great man, in Butcher-row, near Temple-bar.

It is very usual, in the north of England, for a publican, whose name fortunately happens to be John Little, to have the sign of Robin Hood and his constant attendant, with this quibbling subscription:

You gentlemen, and yeomen good,
Come in and drink with Robin Hood;
If Robin Hood be not at home,
Come in and drink with Little John.†

An honest countryman, admiring the conceit, adopted the

* This ballad seems to have been written in imitation of a song in Heywoods Rape of Lucrece, 1630, beginning—

"The gentry to the Kings-head,
The nobles to the crown, &c."

† In Arnolds Essex harmony, (ii. 98.) he gives the inscription, as a catch for three voices, of his own composition, thus:

"My beer is stout, my ale is good,
Pray stay and drink with Robin Hood;
If Robin Hood abroad is gone,
Pray stay and drink with little John."

lines, with a slight, but, as he thought, necessary alteration, viz.

> **If Robin Hood be not at home,**
> **Come in and drink with--Simon Webster.**

Drayton, describing the various ensigns or devices of the English counties, at the battle of Agincourt, gives to

> "Old Nottingham, an archer clad in green,
> Under a tree with his drawn bow that stood,
> Which in a chequer'd flag far off was seen;
> It was the picture of old Robin Hood."

(DD)—"the supernatural powers he is, in some parts, supposed to have possessed."] "In the parish of Halifax is an immense stone or rock, supposed to be a druidical monument, there called Robin Hood's pennystone, which he is said to have used to pitch with at a mark for his amusement. There is likewise another of these stones, of several tons weight, which the country-people will tell you he threw off an adjoining hill with a spade as he was digging. Every thing of the marvellous kind being here attributed to Robin Hood, as it is in Cornwall to K. Arthur." (Watsons History of Halifax, p. 27.)

At Birchover, six miles south of Bakewell, and four from Haddon, in Derbyshire, among several singular groupes of rocks, are some stones called Robin Hoods stride, being two of the highest and most remarkable. The people say Robin Hood lived here.

(EE)—"having a festival allotted to him, and solemn games instituted in honour of his memory, &c."] These games, which were of great antiquity, and different kinds, appear to have been solemnized on the first and succeeding days of May; and to owe their original establishment to the cultivation and improvement of the manly exercise of archery, which was not, in former times, practised merely for the sake of amusement.

"I find," says Stow, "that in the moneth of May, the citizens of London, of all estates, lightlie in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joyning together, had their severall mayinges, and did fetch in Maypoles, with divers warlike shewes, with good archers, morrice-dancers, and other devices for pastime all the day long: and towards the evening they had stage-playes and bonefires in the streetes. . . . . These greate Mayinges and Maygames, made by the governors and masters of this citie, with the triumphant setting up of the greate shafte, (a principall Maypole in Cornhill, before the parish church of S. Andrew, therefore called Undershafte) by meane of an insurrection of youthes against alianes on Mayday, 1517, the ninth of Henry the eight, have not beene so freely used as afore." (Survay of London, 1598. p. 72.)

The disuse of these ancient pastimes, and the consequent "neglect of archerie," are thus pathetically lamented by Richard Niccolls, in his Londons artillery, 1616:

"How is it that our London hath laid downe
This worthy practise, which was once the crowne
Of all her pastime, when her Robin Hood
Had wont each yeare, when May did clad the wood,
With lustie greene, to lead his yong men out,
Whose brave demeanour, oft when they did shoot,
Invited royall princes from their courts,
Into the wilde woods to behold their sports!
Who thought it then a manly sight and trim,
To see a youth of cleane compacted lim,
Who, with a comely grace, in his left hand
Holding his bow, did take his stedfast stand,
Setting his left leg somewhat foorth before,
His arrow with his right hand nocking sure,
Not stooping, nor yet standing streight upright,
Then, with his left hand little 'bove his sight,
Stretching his arm out, with an easie strength,
To draw an arrow of a yard in length."*

A description of one drawing a bow.

* This description is finely illustrated by an excellent wood cut at the head of one of Anthony à Woods old ballads in the Ashmoleian museum. The frontispiece to Gervas Markhams Archerie, 1634, is, likewise, a man drawing a bow.

The lines,

> " Invited royall princes from their courts
> Into the wild woods to behold their sports,"

may be reasonably supposed to allude to Henry VIII. who appears to have been particularly attached, as well to the exercise of archery, as to the observance of May. Some short time after his coronation, says Hall, he " came to Westminster, with the quene, and all their traine: and on a tyme being there, his grace therles of Essex, Wilshire, and other noble menne, to the numbre of twelve, came sodainly in a mornyng into the quenes chambre, all appareled in short cotes of Kentish Kendal, with hodes on their heddes, and hosen of the same, every one of them his bowe and arrowes, and a sworde and a bucklar, like outlawes, or 'Robyn' Hodes men; whereof the quene, the ladies, and al other there were abashed, aswell for the straunge sight, as also for their sodain commyng: and after certayn daunces and pastime made thei departed." (Hen. VIII. fo. 6, b.) The same author gives the following curious account of " A maiynge" in the 7th year of this monarch (1516): " The kyng & the quene, accompanied with many lordes & ladies, roade to the high grounde on Shoters hil to take the open ayre, and as they passed by the way they espied a company of tall yomen, clothed all in grene, with grene whodes & bowes and arrowes, to the number of ii. C. Then one of them whiche called hymselfe Robyn Hood, came to the kyng, desyring hym to se his men shote, & the kyng was content. Then he whisteled, and all the ii. C. archers shot & losed at once; and then he whisteled again, and they likewyse shot agayne; their arrowes whisteled by craft of the head, so that the noyes was straunge and great, and muche pleased the kyng, the quene, and all the company. All

these archers were of the kynges garde, and had thus appareled themselves to make solace to the kynge. Then Robyn Hood desyred the kyng and quene to come into the grene wood, and to se how the outlawes lyve. The kyng demaunded of the quene and her ladyes, if they durst adventure to go into the wood with so many outlawes. Then the quene said, if it pleased hym, she was content. Then the hornes blewe tyll they came to the wood under Shoters-hill, and there was an arber made of bowes, with a hal, and a great chamber, and an inner chamber, very well made and covered with floures and swete herbes, which the kyng muche praised. Then sayd Robyn Hood, Sir, outlawes brekefastes is venyson, and therefore you must be content with such fare as we use. Then the kyng and quene sate doune, and were served with venyson and vyne by Robyn Hood and his men, to their great contentacion. Then the kyng departed and his company, and Robyn Hood and his men them conduicted; and as they were returnyng, there met with them two ladyes in a ryche chariot drawen with v. horses, and every horse had his name on his head, and on every horse sat a lady with her name written . . . . and in the chayre sate the lady May, accompanied with lady Flora, richely appareled; and they saluted the kyng with diverse goodly songes, and so brought hym to Grenewyche. At this maiyng was a greate number of people to beholde, to their great solace and confort." (fo. lvi, b.)

That this sort of May-games was not peculiar to London, appears from a passage in Richard Robinson's "Third assertion Englishe historicall, frendly in favour and furtherance of English archery:"*

* See "The auncient order societie and unitie laudable of prince Arthure and his knightly armory of the round table. . . Translated and

" And, heare because of archery I do by penne explane,
The use, the proffet, and the praise, to England by the same,
Myselfe remembreth of a childe in contreye native mine, (1553)
A May-game was of Robyn Hood, and of his traine that time, (7. E. 6.)
To traine up young men, stripplings and, eche other younger childe,
In shooting, yearely this with solempne feast was by the guylde
Or brotherhood of townsmen don, with sport, with joy, and love,
To proffet which in present tyme, and afterward did prove."

The games of Robin Hood seem to have been occasionally of a dramatic cast. Sir John Paston, in the time of K. Edward IV. complaining of the ingratitude of his servants, mentions one who had promised never to desert him, " and ther uppon," says he, " I have kepyd hym thys iii yer to pleye seynt Jorge, and Robyn Hod and the shryf off Notyngham,* and now when I wolde have good horse he is goon into Bernysdale, and I withowt a keeper."

collected by R. R. London, Imprinted by John Wolfe dwelling in Distaffe-lane neere the signe of the Castle. 1583." 4to. b. l. It appears from this publication that on the revival of London archery in queen Elizabeths time, " the worshipfull socyety of archers," instead of calling themselves after Robin Hood and his companions, took the names of " the magnificent prince Arthure and his knightly traine of the round table." It is, probably, to one of the annual meetings of this identical society, that master Shallow alludes, in The second part of K. Henry IV. " I remember," says he, " at Mile-end green [their usual place of exercise,]—I was then Sir Dagonet in Arthur's shew, &c." (See also Steevens's Shakspeare, 1793. ix. 142.) The successors of the above " friendly and frank fellowship" assumed the ridiculous appellations of duke of Shoreditch, marquis of Clarkenwell, earl of Pancridge, &c. See Woods Bowmans glory, 1682.

* Meaning that his sole or chief employment had been in Christmas or May-games, Whitsun-ales, and such like idle diversions. See Original letters, &c. ii. 134.

In an old circular wood cut, preserved on the title of Robin Hoods Garland, 1670, as well as on that of Adam Bell, &c. printed at Newcastle in 1772, is the apparent representation of a may-game, consisting of the following personages: 1. A bishop. 2. Robin Hood. 3. The potter (or begger). 4. Little John. 5. Frier Tuck. 6. Maid Marian. Figures 2 and 4 are distinguished by their bows, and different size. The frier holds out a cross; and Marian has flowing hair, and wears a sort of coronet. But the execution of the whole is too rude to merit a copy.

In some old accounts of the church-wardens of Saint Helens at Abingdon, Berks, for the year 1556, there is an entry For setting up Robins Hoodes Bower; I suppose, says Warton, for a parish interlude. (See History of English poetry, ii. 175.)*

At lord Fitzwilliams's at Richmond, there is, or lately was, a curious painting, by Vinckenbooms, representing old Richmond palace, with a group of morris-dancers. It has been badly engraved by Godfrey, who reduced the figures to too small a scale. Mr. Douce has a tracing from the original picture with all the figures distinctly marked. See a poem at the end of Hall's Downfall of May-games, 1661. 4to.

* The precise purpose or meaning of setting up Robin Hoods bower has not been satisfactorily ascertained. Mr. Hearne, in an attempt to derive the name of "The Chiltern country" (ċilteɲn, Saxon) from silex, a flint, has the following words: "Certe Silcestriam, &c. i. e. Certainly Silchester, in Hampshire, signifies nothing but the city of flints (that is, a city composed or built of flint-stones). And what is more, in that very Chiltern country you may frequently see houses built of flints, in erecting which, in ancient times, I suppose that many persons involved themselves deeply in debt, and that, in order to extricate themselves, they took up money at interest of I know not what great men, which so far disturbed their minds that they would become thieves, and do many things in no wise agreeable to the English government. Hence, the nobility ordered that large woods in the Chiltern country should, in a great measure, be cut down, lest they should conceal any considerable body of robbers, who were wont to convert the same into lurking places. It concerns this matter to call to mind, that of this sort of robbers was that Robin or Robert Hood, of whom the vulgar dayly sing so many wonderful things. He (being now made an outlaw) before he retired into the north parts, frequently robing in the Chiltern country, lurked in the thickets thereof on purpose that he should not be taken. Thence it was, that to us boys, (exhilarating, according to custom, the mind with sports) certain countrymen, with whom we had accidentally some conversation, shewed us that sort of den or retreat (vulgarly called Robin Hood's bower) in Maydenhead-thicket; which thicket is the same that Leland in his Itinerary, called Frith, by which name the Anglo-Saxons themselves spoke of thickets. For although ƿriþ in reality signifys peace, yet since numerous groves with them (as well as before with the Britons) were deemed sacred, it is by no means to be wondered at that a great wood (because manifestly an asylum) should, in the judgment of the Anglo-Saxons, be called by no other name than ƿriðeƿ: and that Maydenhead-thicket was esteemed among the greater woods Leland himself is a witness. Rightly therefor

In some places, at least, these games were nothing more in effect, than a morris-dance, in which Robin Hood, Little John, Maid Marian, and frier Tuck were the principal personages; the others being a clown or fool, the hobby-horse, (which appears, for some reason or other, to have been frequently forgot,*) the taborer, and the dancers, who were more or less numerous. Thus Warner:

"At Paske began our morrise, and ere penticost our May,
Tho Roben Hood, liell John, frier Tucke, and Marian deftly play,
And lard and ladie gang till kirke with lads and lasses gay."†

Perhaps the clearest idea of these last-mentioned games,

did Robin Hood (as ꝑɼıꝺ-bena) reckon himself to abide there in security. (Chronicon de Dunstaple, p. 387.) What he means by all this is, doubtless, sufficiently obscure: the mere name, however, of Robin Hoods bower seems a very feeble authority for concluding that gallant outlaw to have robed or skulked in the Chiltern-hundreds.

It may seem, perhaps, from a passage in Brownes *Britannias Pastorals* (Song 4), that *Robin Hoods bower* was prepared for the reception of himself and his Marian, as king and queen of May. The lines are these:

"As I have seene the lady of the May
Set in an arbour, on a holy-day,
Built by the May-pole, where the jocund swains,
Dance with the maidens to the bagpipes strains."

* See Steevenses Shakspeare, 1793. x. 186.

† Albions England, 1602, p. 121. It is part of the "Northerne mans speech against the friers." He adds:

"At Baptis-day with ale and cakes bout bonfires neighbours stood,
At Martle masse wa turnd a crabbe, thilke told of Roben Hood,
Till after long time myrke, when blest were windowes, dares and lights,
And pails were fild, and hathes were swept, gainst fairie elves and sprits:
Rock and plow Mondaies gams . . . with saint-feasts and kirk-lights."

A very learned and ingenious gentleman conceives that the enumeration of characters in the passage quoted in the text belongs solely to the *May*, and has no relation whatever to the *morrise*. That the two games, however, though essentially distinct in their origin, got somehow or other blended together appears unquestionable.

"As fit as a *morris* for *May-day*" is one of the clowns similies in *All's well that ends well* (act 2, scene 2).

about the beginning of the 16th century, will be derived from some curious extracts given by Mr. Lysons, in his valuable work intitled "The environs of London," (Vol. I. 1792. p. 226) from the contemporary accounts of the "churchwardens of the parish of Kingston upon Thames."

"Robin Hood and May-game.

"23 Hen. 7. To the menstorell upon May-day	0	0	4
—— For paynting of the mores garments and for sarten gret leveres*	0	2	4
—— For paynting of a bannar for Robin Hode	0	0	3
—— For 2 M. & ½ pynnys	0	0	10
—— For 4 plyts and ½ of laun for the mores garments	0	2	11
——For orseden† for the same	0	0	10

* "The word livery was formerly used to signify any thing delivered; see the Northumberland household book, p. 60. If it ever bore such an acceptation at that time, one might be induced to suppose, from the following entries, that it here meant a badge, or something of that kind:

15 C. of leveres for Robin Hode	0	5	0
For leveres, paper and sateyn	0	0	20
For pynnes and leveres	0	6	5
For 13 C. of leverys	0	4	4
For 24 great lyvereys	0	0	4

We are told that formerly, in the celebration of May-games, the youth divided themselves into two troops, the one in winter livery, the other in the habit of the spring. See Brands Popular antiquities, p. 261." This quotation is misapplied. Liveries, in the present instance, are pieces of paper or sateyn with some device thereon, which were distributed for money among the spectators. So in a passage which will be shortly quoted from Jacke Drums entertainment: "Well said, my boyes, I must have my lords livory; what is't? a May-pole?" See also Stubs's *Anatomie of abuses*, 1583, sig. M. 2. *b*. and Skeltons Don Quixote, part 2. chap. 22.

"† Though it varies considerably from that word, this may be a corruption of orpiment, which was much in use for colouring the morris garments." How orseden can be a corruption of orpiment is not very easy to conceive: it may as well be supposed to mean worsted or buck-

—— For a goun for the lady	0	0	8
—— For bellys for the dawnsars	0	0	12
24 Hen. 7. For little John's cote	0	8	0
1 Hen. 8. For silver paper for the mores dawnsars	0	0	7
—— For Kendall for Robyn Hode's cote . .	0	1	3
—— For 3 yerds of white for the frere's * cote .	0	3	0
—— For 4 yerds of kendall for mayde Marian's † huke ‡	0	3	4
—— For saten of sypers for the same huke . .	0	0	6
—— For 2 payre of glovys for Robin Hode and mayde Maryan	0	0	3
—— For 6 brode arovys.	0	0	6

ram. Mr. Steevens thinks that this *orseden* is the *Arse-dine* of old Joan Trash, in Jonsons *Bartholomew-fair*, and means *flame-coloured paint*, used to *hobby-horses*. The 4 giants for the revived Midsummer shew at Chester, in 1668, were "to be cullered *tinsille arsedine*." (MSS. Har. 2150. fo. 373, b.)

"* The friar's coat was generally of russet, as it appears by the following extracts . . . ." The coat of this mock frier would, doubtless, be made of the same stuff as that of a real one.

"† Marian was the assumed name of the beloved mistress of Robert earl of Huntingdon, whilst he was in a state of outlawry, as Robin Hood was his. See Mr. Steeven's note to a passage in Shakspere's Henry IV. This character in the morris-dances was generally represented by a boy. See Strutt's view of customs and manners, vol. iii. p. 150. It appears by one of the extracts, given above, that at Kingston it was performed by a woman, who was paid a shilling each year for her trouble."

"‡ Mr. Steevens suggests, *with great probability*, that this word may have the same meaning as howve or houve, used by Chaucer for a head-dress; maid Marian's head-dress was always very fine: indeed some persons have derived her name from the Italian word morione, a head-dress." Mr. Steevens was never less happy than he is in this very probable conjecture. The word howve or houve, in Chaucer, is a mere variation of hood: and maid Marians head-dress must, to be sure, have been "very fine" when made of 4 yards of broad cloth! A huke is a womans gown or habit. (Huke, palla, toga, pallium Belgicis feminis usitatum. *Skin.*) Skelton mentions it in his *Elinour Rumming*:

"Her *huke* of Lyncole grene."

"All women in generall," says Moryson, speaking of the Netherlands, "when they goe out of the house, put on a *hoyke* or vaile, which covers

—— To mayde Maryan for her labour for two years	0	2	0
—— To Fygge the taborer	0	6	0
—— Rec^{d} for Robyn Hod's gaderyng 4 marks*			
5 Hen. 8. Rec^{d} for Robin Hood's gaderyng at Croydon	0	9	4
11 Hen. 8. Paid for three broad yerds of rosett for makyng the frer's cote	0	3	6
—— Shoes for the mores daunsars, the frere and mayde Maryan at 7^{d} a payre	0	5	4
13 Hen. 8. Eight yerds of fustyan for the mores daunsars coats	0	16	0
A dosyn of gold skynnes for the morres† . .	0	0	10
15 Hen. 8. Hire of hats for Robynhode . . .	0	0	16
—— Paid for the hat that was lost	0	0	10
16 Hen. 8. Rec^{d} at the church-ale and Robynhode all things deducted	3	10	6
—— Paid for 6 yerds ¼ of satyn for Robyn Hode's cotys	0	12	6
—— For makyng the same	0	2	0
—— For 3 ells of locram‡	0	1	6

their heads, and hangs downe vpon their backs to their legges, &c." (*Itinerary*, 1617, part 3, p. 109.)

Sir John Cullum seems to have mistaken Rose Sparkes "best hook" for a "hook worn, at the bottom of the stays, to regulate the sitting of the apron." (*History of Hawsted*, p. 25.) Morione, in Italian, signifies a murrion or scull-cap; and, though the derivation alluded to appears to have the sanction of Blounts *Glosographia*, nothing can be more completely absurd. *Marian* is *Mary*.

"And *Marians* nose looks rede and raw."

"* It appears that this, as well as other games, was made a parish concern."

"† Probably gilt leather, the pliability of which was particularly accommodated to the motion of the dancers."

"‡ A sort of coarse linen."

21 Hen. 8. For spunging and brushing Robynhode's cotys	0	0	2
28 Hen. 8. Five hats and 4 porses for the daunsars	0	0	4½
—— 4 yerds of cloth for the fole's cote . . .	0	2	0
—— 2 ells of worstede for mayde Maryans kyrtle	0	6	8
—— For 6 payre of double sollyd showne . .	0	4	6
—— To the mynstrele	0	10	8
—— To the fryer and the piper for to go to Croydon	0	0	8

29 Hen. 8. Mem. Lefte in the keping of the wardens nowe beinge.

A fryers cote of russet and a kyrtele of a worstyde weltyd with red cloth, a mowrens * cote of buckram, and 4 morres daunsars cotes of white fustian spangelyd and two gryne saten cotes and a dysardd's † cote of cotton and 6 payre of garters with bells."

These games appear to have been discontinued at Kingston, as a parochial undertaking at least, after the above period, as the industrious inquirer found no further entries relating to them.

Some of the principal characters of the Morris seem to have gradually disappeared, so that at length it consisted only of the dancers, the piper, and the fool. In Mr. Tollets window we find neither Robin Hood nor Little John, though Marian and the frier are stil distinguished performers.‡ But in the scene of one, introduced in the old play of Jacke

" * Probably a Moor's coat; the word Morion is sometimes used to express a Moor.—The morris dance is by some supposed to have been originally derived from Moorish-dance. Black buckram appears to have been much used for the dresses of the ancient mummers. One of the figures in Mr. Tollet's window, is supposed to be a morisco."

" † Disard is an old word for a fool."

‡ In Ben Jonsons " Masque of the metamorphosed gipsies," presented

Drums entertainment, first printed in 1601, there is not the least symptom of any of the four.* "The taber and pipe strike up a morrice. A shoute within: A lord, a lord, a lord, who!†

Ed. Oh, a morrice is come, observe our country sports,
'Tis *Whitson tyde*,‡ and we must frolick it.

Enter the morrice.

The song.

Skip it, and trip it, nimbly, nimbly,
Tickle it, tickle it lustily,
Strike up the taber, for the wenches favour,
Tickle it, tickle it lustily.
Let us be seen, on Hygate greene,
To dance for the honour of Holloway.
Since we are come hither, let's spare for no leather,
To dance for the honour of Holloway.

Ed. Well said, my boyes, I must have my lords livory: what is't? a

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to K. James in 1621, (the very date, by the way, which appears on Mr. Tollets window, we have the following dialogue between *Cochret* and *Clod*:

"*Coc.* Oh the lord! what be these? . . .

Clo. They should be morris-dancers by their gingle, but they have no napkins.

Coc. No, nor a hobby-horse.

Clo. Oh, he's often forgotten, that's no rule; but there is no *maid Marian* nor *friar* amongst them, which is the surer mark.

Coc. Nor a *fool* that I see." *(Tollets Memoir.)*

* Neither is any notice taken of them, where the characters of the morris-dance are mentioned, in The two noble kinsmen, by Shakspeare and Fletcher.

† This was a usual cry on occasions of mirth and jollity. Thus, in the celebration of St. Stephens day, in the Inner-Temple hall, as we find it described in Dugdales Origines juridiciales: "Supper ended, the constable-marshall 'presenteth' himself with drums afore him, mounted upon a scaffold, born by four men; and goeth three times round about the harthe, crying out aloud, A lord, a lord, &c. Then he descendeth and goeth to dance, &c." (p. 156.)

‡ —— "'Tis meet we all go forth,
To view the sick and feeble parts of France:
And let us do it with no show of fear;
No, with no more, that if we heard that England
Were busied with a *Whitsun morris-dance.*"
Shak. *K. Hen. V.* act II. scene 4.

maypole? Troth, 'twere a good body for a courtiers impreza, if it had but this life, Frustra florescit. Hold cousin, hold.

He gives the fool money.

***Foole.* Thankes, cousin, when the lord my fathers audit comes, wee'l repay you againe. Your benevolence too, sir.**

Mam. What! a lords sonne become a begger!

Foole. Why not? when beggers are become lords sons. Come, 'tis but a trifle.

Mam. Oh, sir, many a small make a great.

Foole. No, sir, a few great make a many small. Come, my lords, poore and neede hath no law.

S. Ed. Nor necessitie no right. Drum, downe with them into the celler. Rest content, rest content; one bout more, and then away.

Foole. 'Spoke' like a true heart: I kisse thy foote, sweet knight.

The morrice sing and dance and exeunt.

It is therefore highly probable, as hath been already suggested, that the *may-game of Robin Hood* and the *morris dance* had originally no sort of connection; that the performers had united their forces, because their joint efforts proved more successful, lucrative, or agreeable; and that, in fine, the latter gradually shook off companions from whose association they no longer derived any advantage.*

An old writer, describing a country bridal shew, exhibited before Q. Elizabeth, at Kenilworth castle, in 1575, mentions "a lively moris dauns, according too the auncient manner, six daunsers, mawd Marion, and the fool."

Stubses chapter, upon "Lords of mis-rule," (*Anatomie of abuses*, 1583) contains a singular description of a grand parochial morris-dance, which is worthy of perusal.

It is observable that, in the sham 2d part of *Hudibras*, published 1663, this place is said to be

"Highly famed for *Hocktide games.*"

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* Perhaps also, Robin Hood and his party had never appeared in company with the morris dancers but at one particular period, in the beginning of May, whereas we find that *Whitsuntide* was no less devoted to the latter.

(Greys edition of *Hudibras*, ii. 90.) Of what nature these were (at Kingston) we are not informed. See Plots *Natural history of Oxfordshire;* Lelands *Collectanea*, V.; *Ross.*

Hocktide or *Hock-day* was the Tuesday fortnight after Easter. Two falsehoods are asserted of this festival: one, that its celebration was owing to the general joy excited by the death of Hardecnute, which in fact took place on the 8th of June: the other that it was the anniversary of the general slaughter of the Danes in 1042; which Henry of Huntingdon and others expressly fix on St. Brice's day, being the 13th of November.

It plainly appears, by these extracts, that *Robyn Hode, Little John, the frere* and *mayde Maryan*, were fitted out at the same time with *the mores daunsars*, and, consequently, it would seem, united with them in one and the same exhibition.*

"Also it was said, that the ladie hir selfe, the same daie hir husband and she should be crowned, said that she feared they should prove but as a summer king and queene, such as in countrie townes the yoong folks choose for short to danse about maipoles." Holinshed, at the year 1306.

As to the original institution of may-poles, or king and queen of May,—in a word, of the primitive purpose and celebration of a popular festival at that season,—nothing satisfactory or consequential can be discovered. The curious reader, at the same time, may consult Spelmans Glossary, *voce* MAIUMA, and Ducange, *vv.* MAJUMA, MAIUS.

* It must be confessed, that no other direct authority has been met with for constituting *Robin Hood* and *Little John* integral characters of the morris-dance. That *maid Marian*, however, and *the frier*, were almost constantly such, is proved beyond the possibility of a doubt; and why or how they should become so, without Robin Hood, at least, is unaccountable.

In an old manuscript musick book given lately by Mr. Dalzsel to the advocates library are the following scraps of songs about Robin Hood.

"First when Robin good bow bare,
Was never bairne so bold,
Doune, doune, berrie, doune, doune."

"Now will ye hear a jollie jest,
How Robin Hood was pope of Rome,
And Wallace king of France."

"Jolly Robin goe to the green wood to thy lemman."

"The nock is out of Johnes bow, Joly, joly, &c."

Much curious matter on the subject of the morris-dance is to be found in "Mr. Tollet's opinion concerning the morris-dancers upon his window." (See Steevens's Shakspeare, v. 425. (edition, 1778) or viii. 596. (edition, 1793). See also Mr. Waldrons notes upon the Sad Shepherd, 1783, p. 255. Morris-dancers are said to be yet annually seen in Norfolk,* and make their constant appearance in Lancashire.†

* This county would seem to have been famous for their exertions a couple of centuries ago. Will Kemp the player was a celebrated morris-dancer; and in the Bodleian library is the following scarce and curious tract by him: "Kemps nine daies wonder performed in a daunce from London to Norwich. Containing the pleasure, paines and kind entertainment of William Kemp between London and that city in his late morrice. Wherein is somewhat set downe worth note; to reproove the slaunders spred of him, many things merry, nothing hurtfull. Written by himself to satisfie his friends. London, printed by E. A. for Nicholas Ling. 1600." 4to b. l. On the title-page is a wooden-cut-figure of Kemp as a morris-dancer, preceded by a fellow with a pipe and drum, whom he, in the book, calls Thomas Slye his taberer.—See, in Richard Brathwaytes Remains after death, 1618, some lines "upon Kempe and his morice, with his epitaph."

† "On Monday [July 30] the morris-dancers of Pendleton paid their annual visit in Salford. They were adorned with all the variety of colours that a profusion of ribbons could give them, and had a very showy garland." Star, Aug. 9. 1792.

In Scotland, "The game of Robin Hood was celebrated in the month of May. The populace assembled previous to the celebration of this festival, and chose some respectable* member of the corporation to officiate in the character of Robin Hood, and another in that of Little John his squire. Upon the day appointed, which was a Sunday or holyday, the people assembled in military array, and went to some adjoining field, where, either as actors or spectators, the whole inhabitants of the respective towns were convened. In this field they probably amused themselves with a representation of Robin Hood's predatory exploits, or of his encounters with the officers of justice [rather, perhaps, in feats of archery or military exercises].

"As numerous meetings for disorderly mirth are apt to engender tumult, when the minds of the people came to be agitated with religious controversy, it was found necessary to repress the game† of Robin Hood by public statute. The populace were by no means willing to relinquish their fa-

* "Council register, v. 1. p. 30."

† "Mary, parliament 6. c. 61. A. D. 1555." "Anentis Robert Hude, and abbot of Unreason. Item, It is statute and ordained, that in all times cumming, na maner of person be chosen Robert Hude, nor Little John, abbot of unreason, queenis of Maij, nor utherwise, nouther in burgh, nor to landwart, in onie time to cum: and gif ony provest, baillies, councell, and communitie, chuse sik ane personage as Robert Hude, Little John, abbotis of unreason, or queenis of Maij, within burgh, the chusers of sik sall tine their freedome for the space of five zeires; and utherwise salbe punished at the queenis grace will; and the acceptar of sik like office sall be banished foorth of the realme: and gif ony sik persones .... beis chosen out-with burgh, and uthers landward townes, the chusers sall pay to our soveraine ladie ten poundes, and their persones [be] put in waird there to remaine during the queenis grace pleasure." Abbot of unreason is the character better known in England by the title of abbot or lord of misrule, "who," says Percy, "in the houses of our nobility presided over the Christmas gambols, and promoted mirth and jolity at that festive season." Northumberland household book, (notes,) p. 441.

vourite amusement. Year after year the magistrates of Edinburgh were obliged to exert their authority* in repressing this game; often ineffectually. In the year 1561, the mob were so enraged at being disappointed in making a Robin Hood, that they rose in mutiny, seized on the city-gates, committed robberies upon strangers; and one of the ringleaders being condemned by the magistrates to be hanged, the mob forced open the jail, set at liberty the criminal and all the prisoners, and broke in pieces the gibbet erected at the cross for executing the malefactor. They next assaulted the magistrates, who were †sitting in the council-chamber, and who fled to the tolbooth for shelter, where the mob attacked them, battering the doors, and pouring stones through the windows. Application was made to the deacons of the corporations to appease the tumult. Remaining, however, unconcerned spectators, they made this answer: "They will be magistrates alone; let them rule the people alone." The magistrates were kept in confinement till they made proclamation be published, offering indemnity to the rioters upon laying down their arms. Still, however, so late as the year 1592, we find the general assembly complaining of the profanation of the sabbath, by making ‡of Robin Hood plays." (Arnots History of Edinburgh, p. 77.)

Notwithstanding the above representation, it is certain that these amusements were considerably upon the decline before the year 1568. This appears from a poem by Alexander Scot, preserved in the Hyndford MS. (in the advocates library, compiled and written in that identical year,) and inaccurately printed in *The ever-green*:

* "Council register, v. 4. p. 4. 30."

† "Knox's history, p. 270."

‡ "Book of universal kirk, p. 414." See also Keiths History of Scotland, p. 216.

" In May quhen men zeid everichone
With Robene Hoid and Littill Johne,
To bring in bowis and birkin bobbynis:
Now all sic game is fastlingis gone,
Bot gif it be amangis clovin Robbynis."

(FF)—" His bow, and one of his arrows, his chair, his cap, and one of his slippers were preserved till within the present century." "We omitted," says Ray, "the sight of Fountain's abbey, where Robin Hood's bow is kept." (Itineraries, 1760, p. 161.)

" Having pleased ourselves with the antiquities of 'Nottingham,' we took horse and went to visit the well and ancient chair of Robin Hood, which is not far from hence, within the forest of Sherwood. Being placed in the chair, we had a cap, which they say was his, very formally put upon our heads, and having performed the usual ceremonies befitting so great a solemnity, we receiv'd the freedom of the chair, and were incorporated into the society of that renowned brotherhood." (Bromes Travels over England, &c. 1700, p. 85.)

" On one side of this forest [sci. of Sherwood] towards Nottingham," says the author of "The travels of Tom Thumb over England and Wales," (i. e. Robert Dodsley,) "I was shewn a chair, a bow, and arrow, all said to have been his [Robin Hoods] property." (p. 82.)

" I was pleased with a slipper, belonging to the famous Robin Hood, shewn me, fifty years ago, at St. Anns well, near Nottingham, a place upon the borders of Sherwood forest, to which he resorted." (Journey from Birmingham to London, by W. Hutton. Bir. 1785, p. 174.)

(GG)—" not only places which afforded him security or amusement, but even the well at which he quenched his thirst, still retain his name."] Robin-hoods-bay is both a

bay and a village, on the coast of Yorkshire, between Whitby and Scarborough. It is mentioned by Leland as "a fischer tounlet of 20. bootes caullid Robyn Huddes bay, a dok or bosom of a mile yn length." (Itinerary, i. 53.) "When his robberies," says master Charlton, "became so numerous, and the outcries against him so loud, as almost to alarm the whole nation, parties of soldiers were sent down from London to apprehend him: and then it was, that fearing for his safety, he found it necessary to desert his usual haunts, and, retreating northward, to cross the moors that surrounded Whitby, [one side whereof happens, a little unfortunately, to lye open to the sea,] where, gaining the sea-coast, he always had in readiness near at hand some small fishing vessels, to which he could have refuge, if he found himself pursued; for in these, putting off to sea, he looked upon himself as quite secure, and held the whole power of the English nation at defiance. The chief place of his resort at these times, where his boats were generally laid up, was about six miles from Whitby, to which he communicated his name, and which is still called Robin Hoods bay. There he frequently went a fishing in the summer season, even when no enemy appeared to annoy him, and not far from that place he had buts or marks set up, where he used to exercise his men in shooting with the long-bow."*

* History of Whitby, York, 1779, p. 146. "It was always believed," adds the worthy pedagogue, "that these butts had been erected by him for that very purpose, till the year 1771, when this popular notion was discovered to be a mistake; they being no more than the barrows or tumuli thrown up by our pagan predecessors on interring their leaders or the other persons of distinction amongst them. However, notwithstanding this discovery, there is no doubt but Robin Hood made use of those houes or butts when he was disposed to exercise his men, and wanted to train them up in hitting a mark." Be that as it may, there are a few hillocks of a similar nature not far from Guisbrough, which

Near Gloucester is "a famous hill," called "Robin Hoods hill;" concerning which there is a very foolish modern song. Another hill of the same name exists in the neighbourhood of Castleton, Derbyshire.

"Over a spring call'd Robin Hoods well, (3 or 4 miles [on] this side [i.e. north] of Doncaster, and but a quarter of a mile only from 2 towns call'd Skelbrough and Bourwallis) is a very handsome stone arch, erected by the lord Carlisle, where passengers from the coach frequently drink of the fair water, and give their charity to two people who attend there." (Gents History of York. York, 1730, p. 234.*)

Though there is no attendance at present, nor is the water altogether so fair as it might and should be, the case was otherwise in the days of honest Barnaby.

"Veni Doncaster, &c.
Nescit sitis artem modi,
Puteum Roberti Hoodi
Veni, & liquente vena

---

likewise bear the name of Robin Hoods buts; and others, it is imagined, may be met with in other parts.

* Epigram on Robin Hoods well, "a fine spring on the road, ornamented by sir John Vanbrugh;" By Roger Gale, esq. (Bib. Topo. Britan. No. II. part III. p. 427.)

"Nympha fui quondam latronibus hospita sylvæ
Heu nimium sociis nota, Robine, tuis.
Me pudet innocuos latices fudisse scelestis,
Jamque viatori pocula tuta fero,
En pietatis honos! Comes hanc mihi Carliolensis
Ædem sacravit quâ bibis, hospes, aquas."

The same author (Gent), in his "long and pathetick prologue," setting forth "the contingencies, vicissitudes or changes of this transitory life," "spoken, for the most part, on Wednesday and Friday the 18th and 20th of February, 1761, at the deep tragedy of beautiful, eloquent, tender-hearted, but unfortunate Jane Shore, ... uttered and performed at his benefit" . . . (being then ætatis 70, and far declined into the vale

Vincto* catino catena,
Tollens sitim, parcum odi,
Solvens obolum custodi.

"Thence to Doncaster, &c.
Thirst knowes neither meane nor measure,
Robin Hoods well was my treasure;
In a† common dish enchained,
I my furious thirst restrained:
And because I drunk the deeper,
I paid two farthings to the keeper."

He mentions it again:

"Nunc longinquos locos odi,
Vale fons Roberti Hoodi.

"Now I hate all foreign places
Robin Hoods well, and his chaces."

A different well, sacred either to Robin Hood, or to St. Ann, has been already mentioned.

of sorrow,§) has very artfully contrived to introduce our hero and his famous well.

"The concave hall, 'mongst sources never view'd,
Nor heard the goddesses, in merry mood,
At their choice viands sing bold Robin Hood:‖
Whose tomb at Kirkleys nunnery display'd,
A false, hard-hearted, irreligious maid,
Who bled, and to cold death that earl betray'd.
But fame still lasts, while country folks display
His limpid fountain, and loud-surging bay."

* **"Viventes venæ, spine, catinusque catenæ,**
Sunt Robin Hoodi nota trophæa sui."

† **"A well, thorne, dish, hung in an iron chaine,**
For monuments of Robin Hood remaine."

---

§ He dyed in 1778, aged 87.

‖ **"Omnes agnovere deam; lætique receptant**
Alcæum musæ comitem, ponuntur lâcchi
Crateres; flaventque scyphis Cerealia vina:
Accedunt vultus hilares; festique lepores,
Et jocus, et risus: dulci testudine Naias
Pulchra modos variat; furtisque insignis et arcu
Hodi latronis, fluvios bene nota per istos,
Ludicra gesta canit: resonant laquearia plausu."

"Not far [off Bitham, in Lincolnshire] is *Robyn Huddes cros*, a *limes* of the shires." Lelands Itinerary, I. 25.

(HH)—"conferred as a singular distinction upon the prime minister to the king of Madagascar."] The natives of this island, who have dealings with our people, pride themselves, it seems, in English names, which are bestowed upon them at the discretion or caprice of the sailors: and thus a venerable minister of state, who should have been called sir Robert Walpole or cardinal Fleury, acquired the name of Robin Hood. Mr. Ives, by whom he is frequently mentioned, relates the following anecdote:

"The reader will excuse my giving him another instance ....which still more strikingly displays the extreme sensibility of these islanders, in respect to their kings dignity. Robin Hood (who seemed to act as prime minister, and negotiated most of the king's concerns with our agent-victualler) was one day transacting business with another gentleman of the squadron, and they happened to differ so much about the value of a certain commodity, that high words arose, and at length Robin Hood in the greatest agitation started from the ground where he was sitting, and swore that he would immediately acquaint the king of Baba with what had passed. Our English gentleman, too much heated with this threat, and the violent altercation which had preceded it, unguardedly replied, "D—n the king of Baba."—The eyes of Robin Hood flashed like lightning, and in the most violent wrath he retorted, "D—n king George." At the same instant he left the spot, hurrying away towards the Madagascarian cottages. Our countryman was soon struck with the impropriety of his behaviour, followed and overtook the disputant, and having made all proper concessions, the affair was happily terminated."*

* Voyage from England to India, 1773, p. 8. In a subsequent page,

(II) "After his death his company was dispersed."] They and their successors, disciples or followers, are supposed to have been afterward distinguished, from the name of their gallant leader, by the title of Roberdsmen. Lord Coke, who is somewhat singular in accusing him of living "by robbery, burning of houses, felony, waste and spoil, and principally by and with vagabonds, idle wanderers, night-walkers, and draw-latches," says that "albeit he lived in Yorkshire, yet men of his quality took their denomination of him, and were called Roberdsmen throughout all England. Against these men," continues he, "was the statute of Winchester made in 13 E. 1. [c. 14.] for preventing of robbery, murders, burning of houses, &c. Also the statute of 5 E. 3. [c. 14.] which 'recites' the statute of Winchester, and that there had been divers manslaughters, felonies, and robberies done in times past, by people that be called Roberdsmen, wasters and draw-latches; and remedy [is] provided by that act for the arresting of them. At the parliament holden 50 E. 3." he adds, "it was petitioned to the king that ribauds and sturdy beggars might be banished out of every town. The answer of the king in parliament was, touching ribauds: The statute of Winchester and the declaration of the same with other statutes of Roberdsmen, and for such as make themselves gentlemen, and men of armes, and archers, if they cannot so prove themselves, let them be driven to their occupation or service, or to the place from whence they came." He likewise notices the statute of 7 R. 2. [c. 5.] by which it is provided "that the statutes of roberdsmen and draw-latches, be firmly holden and kept." (3 Inst. 197.)

this great man is employed in a commerce of a more delicate, indeed, but, according to European notions, less honorable nature, which he manages with consummate address.

These Roberdsmen are mentioned in Pierce the ploughmans crede, written about 1400:

"And right as Robartesmen raken aboute." *

Mr. Warton, who had once thought that the friers Robertines were here meant, observes that "the expression of Robin hoodes men, in bishop Latimers sermon, is not without an allusion to the bad sense of Roberdsmen." (H. E. P. ii. additions, sig. d. 4.) It does not, however, appear that the latter word has been ever used in a good one; nor is there, after all, sufficient ground for concluding that these people were so named after Robin Hood.

(KK)—"the honour of little Johns death and burial is contended for by rival nations."] I. By England. At the village of Hathersage, about 6 miles from Castleton, in Derbyshire, is Little Johns grave. A few years ago some curious person caused it to be opened, when there were found several bones of an uncommon size which he preserved; but, meeting afterward with many unlucky accidents, he carefully replaced them; partly at the intercession of the sexton, who had taken them up for him, and who had in like manner been visited with misfortunes: upon restoring the bones all these troubles ceased. Such is the tradition at Castleton. E. Hargrove, in his "Anecdotes of archery," York, 1792, asserts, that "the grave is distinguished by a large stone placed at the head, and another at the feet; on each of which are yet some remains of the letters I. L." (p. 26.)† II. By Scotland. "In

* They likewise seem alluded to in the Vision, fo. 1, b.

"And ryse wyth ribaudy as Rebertes knaves."

† "On a loose paper, in Mr. Ashmole's hand writing, in the museum at Oxford, is the following little anecdote:

"The famous Little John (Robin Hood's companion) lyes buried in

Murray land" according to that most veracious historian, maister Hector Bois, "is the kirke of Pette, quhare the banis of lytill Johne remanis in gret admiratioun of pepill. He hes bene fourtene fut of hycht* with square membris effering thairto. Vi. zeris," continues he, "afore the cumyng of this werk to lycht we saw his hanche-bane, als mekill as the haill bane of ane man: for we schot our arme in the mouth thairof. Be quhilk apperis how strang and square pepill grew in our regioun afore thay were effeminat with lust and intemperance of mouth."† III. By Ireland. "There standeth," as Stanihurst relates, "in Ostmantowne greene an hillocke, named little John his shot. The occasion," he says, "proceeded of this.

"In the yeere one thousand one hundred foure score and nine, there ranged three robbers and outlaws in England, among which Robert Hood and Little John weere cheefeteins, of all theeves doubtlesse the most courteous. Robert Hood being betrayed at a nunrie in Scotland called Bricklies, the remnant of the crue was scattered, and everie man forced to shift for himselfe. Whereupon little John was faine to flee

Fethersedge church-yard, in the peak of Derbyshire, one stone at his head, another at his feet, and part of his bow hangs up in the chancell. Anno 1652." H. E[llis]. European magazine, October, 1794. p. 295.

* This seems the established size of an ancient hero. The grave of Gawin, king Arthurs nephew, discovered in the time of William the Conqueror, was, according to Malmesbury, "*quatuordecim pedes longum.*" (De gestis regum, *l.* 3.) Bois, from the above circumstance, conceives our "Litil Jhon" to have been so called "*per ironiam.*" See his original work, fo. lx.

† Historie of Scotland, translatit be maister Johne Bellenden, Edin. 1541, fo. The luxury of his countrymen will appear a strange complaint, in the mouth of a Scotishman of the 16th century, to such as believe, with the late Dr. Johnson, that they learned to plant kail from Cromwells soldiers, and that "when they had not kail they probably had nothing." (Journey to the Western Islands, p. 55.)

the realme by sailing into Ireland, where he sojornied for a few daies at Dublin. The citizens being doone to understand the wandering outcast to be an excellent archer, requested him hartilie to trie how far he could shoot at randon; who yeelding to their behest, stood on the bridge of Dublin, and shot to that mole hill, leaving behind him a monument, rather by his posteritie to be woondered, than possiblie by anie man living to be counterscored. But as the repaire of so notorious a champion to anie countrie would soone be published, so his abode could not be long concealed: and therefore to eschew the danger of [the] lawes, he fled into Scotland, where he died at a towne or village called Moravie."* Thus Stanihurst, who is quoted by Dr. Hanmer in his Chronicle of Ireland, p. 179. but Mr. Walker, after observing that "poor Little John's great practical skill in archery could not save him from an ignominious fate," says, "it appeared, from some records in the Southwell family, that he was publicly executed for robbery on Arbor-hill, Dublin."†

(KK)—"some of his descendants, of the name of Nailor, &c."] See the preface to the History of George a Green. As surnames were by no means in general use at the close of the twelfth century, Little John may have obtained that of Nailor from his original profession.

("Ye boasted worthies of the knuckle,
To Maggs and to the Nailor trnckle.")

But however this, or the fact itself may be, a bow, said to

* Description of Ireland, in Holinsheds chronicle, 1587.

† Historical essay, &c. p. 129. This allegation demands what the lawyers call a profert in curiam. It is, however, certain that there have been persons who usurped the name of Little John. In the year 1502, "abont mydsomer, was taken a felow whyche had renned many of Robyn Hodes pagentes, which named hymselfe Grenelef." (Fabyans chronicle, 1559.) Therefore, beware of counterfeits!

have belonged to Little John, with the name of Naylor upon it, is now, as the editor is informed, in the possession of a gentleman in the west riding of Yorkshire.

The quotation about whetstones is from the Sloan MS. Those, indeed, who recollect the equivocal meaning of the word may think that this production has not been altogether confined to the grave of Little John.

END OF THE LIFE, ETC.



ROBIN HOOD.

PART I.

I.

A LYTELL GESTE OF ROBYN HODE.

THIS ancient legend is printed from the copy of an edition, in 4to. and black letter, by Wynken de Worde, preserved in the public library at Cambridge; compared with, and, in some places, corrected by, another impression (apparently from the former), likewise in 4to. and black letter, by William Copland; a copy of which is among the late Mr. Garricks old plays, now in the British Museum. The full title of the first edition is as follows:

" Here beginneth a mery geste of Robyn Hode and his meyne, and of the proude sheryfe of Notyngham;" and the printers colophon runs thus: " Explycit. Kynge Edwarde and Robyn hode and Lytell Johan Enprented at London in Flete strete at the sygne of the sone By Wynken de Worde." To Coplands edition is added " a newe playe for to be played in Maye games very plesaunte and full of pastyme;" which will be found at large in another place. No other copy of either edition is known to be extant; but, by the favour of the reverend Dr. Farmer, the editor had in his hands and gave to Mr. Douce a few leaves of an old 4to. black letter impression, by the above Wynken de Worde, probably in 1489; and totally unknown to Ames and Herbert. Another edition was printed at Edinburgh by Androw Myllar and Walter Chepman in 1508, a fragment whereof is in the Advocates library there. This is, probably, the edition noticed among the tales enumerated in Wedderburns Complainte of Scotland, printed at St. Andrews in 1549, under the title of " Robene Hude and litil Jhone." Among the doctors numerous literary curiosities was likewise another edition, " printed," after Coplands, " for Edward White," (4to. black letter, no date, but entered in the Stationers books 13 May, 1594) which hath been collated, and every variation worthy of notice either adopted or remarked in the margin. The only desertion from all the copies (except in necessary corrections) is the division of stanzas, the indenting of the lines, the addition of points, the disuse of abbreviations, and the occasional introduction or rejection of a capital letter; liberties, if they may be so called, which have been taken with most of the other poems in this collection.

LITHE and lysten, gentylmen,
That be of frebore blode;
I shall you tell of a good yemàn,
His name was Robyn Hode.

Robyn was a proude outlawe,
Whyles he walked on grounde,
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one
Was never none yfounde.

Robyn stode in Bernysdale,
And lened hym to a tree,
And by hym stode Lytell Johan,
A good yeman was he;

And also dyde good Scathelock,
And Much the millers sone;
There was no ynche of his body,
But it was worthe a grome.

Than bespake hym Lytell Johan
All unto Robyn Hode,
Mayster, yf ye wolde dyne betyme,
It wolde do you moch good.

Then bespake good Robyn,
To dyne I have no lust,
Tyll I have some bolde barón,
Or some unketh gest,

[Or els some byshop or abbot]
That may paye for the best;
Or some knyght or some squyere
That dwelleth here by west.

V. 25. The irregularity or defect of the versification, in this and similar passages, is probably owing to the loss of a line.

A good maner than had Robyn,
In londe where that he were,
Every daye or he woulde dyne
Thre messes wolde he here:

The one in the worshyp of the fader,
The other of the holy goost,
The thyrde was of our dere lady,
That he loved of all other moste.

Robyn loved our dere lady,
For doute of dedely synne;
Wolde he never do company harme
That ony woman was ynne.

Mayster, than sayd Lytell Johan,
And we our borde shall sprede,
Tell us whether we shall gone,
And what lyfe we shall lede;

Where we shall take, where we shall leve,
Where we shall abide behynde,
Where we shall robbe, where we shall reve,
Where we shall bete and bynde.

Ther of no fors, sayd Robyn,
We shall do well ynough;
But loke ye do no housbonde harme
That tylleth with his plough;

No more ye shall no good yemàn,
That walketh by grene wode shawe,
Ne no knyght, ne no squyèr,
That wolde be a good felawe.

These bysshoppes, and thyse archebysshoppes,
Ye shall them bete and bynde;
The hye sheryfe of Notynghame,
Hym holde in your mynde.

This worde shall be holde, sayd Lytyll Johan,
And this lesson shall we lere;
It is ferre dayes, god sende us a gest,
That we were at our dynere.

Take thy good bowe in thy hande, said Robyn,
Let Moche wende with the,
And so shall Wyllyam Scathelocke,
And no man abyde with me:

And walke up to the Sayles,
And so to Watlynge-strete,*
And wayte after some unketh gest,
Up-chaunce ye mowe them mete.

* This seems to have been, and, in many parts, is still the name generally used by the vulgar for Erming-street. The course of the real Watling-street was from Dover to Chester.

The Sayles appears to be some place in the neighbourhood of Barnsdale, but no mention of it has elsewhere occured; though, it is believed, there is a field so called not far from Doncaster.

Be he erle or ony barón,
Abbot or ony knyght,
Brynge hym to lodge to me,
Hys dyner shall be dyght.

They wente unto the Sayles,
These yemen all thre,
They loked est, they loked west,
They myght no man see.

But as they loked in Barnysdale,
By a derne strete,
Then came there a knyght rydynge,
Full sone they gan hym mete.

All dreri then was his semblaunte,
And lytell was hys pryde,
Hys one fote in the sterope stode,
That other waved besyde.

Hys hode hangynge over hys eyen two,
He rode in symple aray;
A soryer man than he was one
Rode never in somers-day.

Lytell Johan was curteyse,
And set hym on his kne:
Welcome be ye, gentyll knyght,
Welcome are you to me,

V. 84. all his. PCC.

Welcome be thou to grene wood,
Hende knyght and fre;
My mayster hath abyden you fastynge,
Syr, all these oures thre.

Who is your mayster? sayd the knyght.
Johan sayde, Robyn Hode.
He is a good yeman, sayd the knyght,
Of hym I have herde moch good.

I graunte, he sayd, with you to wende,
My brethren all in-fere;
My purpose was to have deyned to day
At Blythe or Dankastere.

Forthe than went this gentyll knyght,
With a carefull chere,
The teres out of his eyen ran,
And fell downe by his lere.

They brought hym unto the lodge dore,
When Robyn gan hym se,
Full curteysly dyde of his hode,
And set hym on his kne.

Welcome, syr knyght, then said Robyn,
Welcome thou arte to me,
I haue abyde you fastynge, syr,
All these houres thre.

V. 105. So R. [Rastall.] all thre. W. C. [de Worde and Copland.] V. 108. this. R. that. W. C. V. 111. ere. R.

Then answered the gentyll knyght,
With wordes fayre and fre,
God the save, good Robyn,
And all thy fayre meynè.

They washed togyder and wyped bothe,
And set tyll theyr dynere;
Brede and wyne they had ynough,
And nombles of the dere;

Swannes and fesauntes they had full good,
And foules of the revere;
There fayled never so lytell a byrde,
That ever was bred on brere.

Do gladly, syr knyght, sayd Robyn.
Gramercy, syr, sayd he,
Suche a dyner had I not
Of all these wekes thre:

If I come agayne, Robyn,
Here by this countrè,
As good a dyner I shall the make,
As thou hast made to me.

Gramercy, knyght, sayd Robyn,
My dyner whan I have,
I was never so gredy, by dere worthy god,
My dyner for to crave.

But pay or ye wende, sayd Robyn,
Me thynketh it is good ryght;
It was never the maner, by dere worthy god,
A yeman to pay for a knyght.

I have nought in my cofers, sayd the knyght,
That I may profer for shame.
Lytell Johan, go loke, sayd Robyn,
Ne let not for no blame.

Tell me trouth, sayd Robyn,
So god have parte of the.
I have no more but ten shillings, sayd the knyght,
So god have parte of me.

Yf thou have no more, sayd Robyn,
I wyll not one peny;
And yf thou have nede of ony more,
More shall I len the.

Go now forth, Lytell Johan,
The trouthe tell thou me,
Yf there be no more but ten shillings,
Not one peny that I se.

Lytell Johan spred downe his mantèll
Full fayre upon the grounde,
And there he founde in the knyghtes cofer
But even halfe a pounde.

V. 147. to pay. R. pay. W. C. V. 150. Robyn. R. Robyn Hoode. W. C.

Lytyll Johan let it lye full styll,
And went to his mayster full lowe.
What tydynge Johan? sayd Robyn.
"Syr, the knyght is trewe inough."

Fyll of the best wyne, sayd Robyn,
The knyght shall begynne;
Moch wonder thynketh me
Thy clothynge is so thynne.

Tell me one worde, sayd Robyn,
And counsell shall it be;
I trowe thou were made a knyght of forse,
Or elles of yemanry;

Or elles thou hast ben a sory housband,
And leved in stroke and stryfe;
An okerer, or elles a lechoure, sayd Robyn,
With wronge hast thou lede thy lyfe.

I am none of them, sayd the knyght,
By god that made me;
An hondreth wynter here before,
Myne aunsetters knyghtes have be.

But ofte it hath befal, Robyn,
A man hath be dysgrate;
But god that syteth in heven above
May amend his state.

Within two or thre yere, Robyn, he sayd,
My neyghbores well it ‘ kende,’
Foure houdreth pounde of good money
Full wel than myght I spende.

Now have I no good, sayd the knyght,
But my chyldren and my wyfe ;
God hath shapen such an ende,
Tyll god ‘ may amende my lyfe.’

In what maner, sayd Robyn,
Hast thou lore thy rychès ?
For my grete foly, he sayd,
And for my kindenesse.

I had a sone, for soth, Robyn,
That sholde have ben my eyre,
When he was twenty wynter olde,
In felde wolde juste full feyre ;

He slewe a knyght of Lancastshyre,
And a squyre bolde ;
For to save hym in his ryght
My goodes beth sette and solde ;

My londes beth set to wedde, Robyn,
Untyll a certayne daye,
To a ryche abbot here besyde,
Of Saynt Mary abbay.

V. 192. two yere. R. V. 193. knowe. OCC. V. 199. it may amende. OCC. V. 208. lancasesshyre. R.

What is the somme? sayd Robyn,
Trouthe than tell thou me.
Syr, he sayd, foure hondred pounde,
The abbot tolde it to me.

Now, and thou lese thy londe, sayd Robyn,
What shall fall of the?
Hastely I wyll me buske, sayd the knyght,
Over the salte see,

And se where Cryst was quycke and deed,
On the mounte of Caluarè.
Fare well, frende, and have good daye,
It may noo better be——

Teeres fell out of his eyen two,
He wolde haue gone his waye—
Farewell, frendes, and have good day,
I ne have more to pay.

Where be thy friendes? sayd Robyn.
" Syr, never one wyll me know;
Whyle I was ryche inow at home
Grete bost then wolde they blowe,

And now they renne awaye fro me,
As bestes on a rowe;
They take no more heed of me
Then they me never sawe."

V. 227. not. W. C. V. 232. by. W. C. V. 233. So R. knowe me. W. C. The fragment of Rastalls edition ends with v. 238.

For ruthe then wepte Lytell Johan,
Scathelocke and Much 'in fere.'
Fyll of the best wyne, sayd Robyn,
For here is a symple chere.

Hast thou ony frendes, sayd Robyn,
Thy borowes that wyll be?
I have none, then sayd the knyght,
But god that dyed on a tree.

Do waye thy japes, sayd Robyn,
Therof wyll I right none;
Wenest thou I wyll have god to borowe?
Peter, Poule or Johan?

Nay, by hym that me made,
And shope both sonne and mone,
Fynde a better borowe, sayd Robyn,
Or mony getest thou none.

I have none other, sayd the knyght,
The sothe for to say,
But yf it be our dere lady,
She fayled me never or this day.

By dere worthy god, sayd Robyn,
To seche all Englond thorowe,
Yet founde I never to my pay,
A moch better borowe.

V. 241. also. PCC. V. 242. Wyme. PCC.

Come now forthe, Lytell Johan,
And goo to my tresourè,
And brynge me foure hondred pounde.
And loke that it well tolde be.

Forthe then wente Lytell Johan,
And Scathelocke went before,
He tolde out foure houndred pounde,
By eyghtene score.*

Is this well tolde? sayd lytell Much.
Johan sayd, What greveth the?
It is almes to helpe a gentyll knyght
That is fall in povertè.

Mayster, than sayd Lytell Johan,
His clothynge is full thynne,
Ye must gyve the knyght a lyveray,
To 'lappe' his body ther in.

For ye have scarlet and grene, mayster,
And many a ryche aray,
There is no marchaunt in mery Englonde
So ryche, I dare well saye.

Take hym thre yerdes of every coloure,
And loke that well mete it be.
Lytell Johan toke none other mesure
But his bowe tre,

* i. e. By so many score to the hundred; or three hundred for one. It is certainly a very hyperbolical expression: But he measures the cloth in the same way.

V. 279. helpe. W. wrappe. C.

And of every handfull that he met
He lept ouer fotes thre.
What devilkyns draper, sayd litell Much,
Thynkyst thou to be?

Scathelocke stoode full styll and lough,
And sayd, By god allmyght,
Johan may gyve hym the better mesure,
By god, it cost him but lyght.

Mayster, sayd Lytell Johan,
All unto Robyn Hode,
Ye must gyve that knight an hors,
To lede home al this good.

Take hym a gray courser, sayd Robyn,
And a sadell newe;
He is our ladyes messengere,
God lene that he be true.

And a good palfraye, sayd lytell Moch,
To mayntayne hym in his ryght.
And a payre of botes, sayd Scathelocke,
For he is a gentyll knyght.

What shalt thou gyve hym, Lytel Johan? sayd
Syr, a payre of gylte spores clene, [Robyn.
To pray for all this company:
God brynge hym out of tene!

V. 303. leue. W. lende. C.

Whan shall my daye be, sayd the knyght,
Syr, and your wyll be?
This daye twelve moneth, sayd Robyn,
Under this grene wode tre.

It were grete shame, sayd Robyn,
A knyght alone to ryde,
Without squyer, yeman or page,
To walke by hys syde.

I shall the lene Lytyll Johan my man,
For he shall be thy knave;
In a yemans steed he may the stonde,
Yf thou grete nede have.

THE SECONDE FYTTE.

Nowe is the knyght went on this way,
This game he thought full good,
When he loked on Bernysdale,
He blyssed Robyn Hode;

And whan he thought on Bernysdale,
On Scathelock, Much, and Johan,
He blyssed them for the best company
That ever he in come.

Then spake that gentyll knyght,
To Lytel Johan gan he saye,
To morowe I must to Yorke toune,
To Saynt Mary abbay;

And to the abbot of that place
Foure hondred pounde I must pay:
And but I be there upon this nyght
My londe is lost for ay.

The abbot sayd to his covent,
There he stode on grounde,
This day twelfe moneth came there a knyght
And borowed foure hondred pounde.

[He borowed foure hondred pounde,]
Upon all his londe fre,
But he come this ylke day
Dysherytye shall he be.

It is full erely, sayd the pryoure,*
The day is not yet ferre gone,
I had lever to pay an hondred pounde,
And lay it downe a none.

The knyght is ferre be yonde the see,
In Englonde is his ryght,
And suffreth honger and colde
And many a sory nyght:

* The prior, in an abbey, was the officer immediately under the abbot; in priories and conventual cathedrals he was the superior.

It were grete pytè, sayd the pryoure,
So to have his londe,
And ye be so lyght of your conseyence
Ye do to him moch wronge.

Thou arte euer in my berde, sayd the abbot,
By god and saynt Rycharde.*
With that cam in a fat-heded monke,
The heygh selerer;

He is dede or hanged, sayd the monke,
By god that bought me dere,
And we shall have to spende in this place
Foure hondred pounde by yere.

The abbot and the hy selerer,
Sterte forthe full bolde,
The high justyce of Englonde
The abbot there dyde holde.

* This was a "S. Richard king and confessour, sonne to Lotharius king of Kent, who, for the love of Christ, taking upon him a long peregrination, went to Rome for devotion to that sea, and in his way homward, died at Luca, about the year of Christ, seaven hundred and fifty, where his body is kept untill this day with great veneration, in the oratory and chappell of S. Frigidian, and adorned with an epitaph both in verse and prose." English Martyrologe, 1608.

There were other saints of the same name, as Richard de la Wich, bishop of Chichester, canonized in 1262; and Richard, bishop of St. Andrews in Calabria. See Draytons Poly-Olbion, Song 24.

The hye justyce and many mo
Had take into their honde
Holy all the knyghtes det,
To put that knyght to wronge.

They demed the knyght wonder sore,
The abbot and hys meynè:
" But he come this ylke day
Dysheryte shall he be."

He wyll not come yet, sayd the justyce,
I dare well undertake.
But in sorowe tyme for them all
The knyght came to the gate.

Than bespake that gentyll knyght
Untyll hys meynè,
Now put on your symple wedes
That ye brought fro the see.

[They put on their symple wedes,]
And came to the gates anone,
The porter was redy hymselfe,
And welcomed them everychone.

Welcome, syr knyght, sayd the portèr,
My lorde to mete is he,
And so is many a gentyll man,
For the love of the.

The porter swore a full grete othe,
By god that made me,
Here be the best coresed hors
That ever yet sawe I me.

Lede them into the stable, he sayd,
That eased myght they be.
They shall not come therin, sayd the knyght,
By god that dyed on a tre.

Lordes were to mete isette
In that abbotes hall,
The knyght went forth and kneled downe,
And salved them grete and small.

Do gladly, syr abbot, sayd the knyght,
I am come to holde my day.
The fyrst word the abbot spake,
Hast thou brought my pay?

Not one peny, sayd the knyght,
By god that maked me.
Thou art a shrewed dettour, sayd the abbot;
Syr justyce, drynke to me.

What doost thou here, sayd the abbot,
But thou haddest brought thy pay?
For god, than sayd the knyght,
To pray of a lenger daye.

Thy daye is broke, sayd the justyce,
Londe getest thou none.
" Now, good syr justyce, be my frende,
And fende me of my fone."

I am holde with the abbot, sayd the justyce,
Bothe with cloth and fee.
" Now, good syr sheryf, be my frende."
Nay for god, sayd he.

" Now, good syr abbot, be my frende,
For thy curteysè,
And holde my londes in thy honde
Tyll I have made the gree;

And I wyll be thy true servaunte,
And trewely serve the,
Tyl ye have foure hondred pounde
Of money good and free."

The abbot sware a full grete othe,
By god that dyed on a tree,
Get the londe where thou may,
For thou getest none of me.

By dere worthy god, then sayd the knyght,
That all this worlde wrought,
But I have my londe agayne
Full dere it shall be bought;

God, that was of a mayden borne,
Lene us well to spede!
For it is good to assay a frende
Or that a man have nede.

The abbot lothely on hym gan loke
And vylaynesly hym gan 'call;'
Out, he sayd, thou false knyght,
Spede the out of my hall!

Thou lyest, then sayd the gentyll knyght,
Abbot in thy hal;
False knyght was I never,
By god that made us all.

Up then stode that gentyll knyght,
To the abbot sayd he,
To suffre a knyght to knele so longe,
Thou canst no curteysye;

In joustes and in tournement
Full ferre than have I be,
And put myselfe as ferre in prees
As ony that ever I se.

What wyll ye gyve more? sayd the justyce,
And the knyght shall make a releyse;
And elles dare I safly swere
Ye holde never your londe in pees.

V. 122. leue. W. Sende us. C. V. 126. loke. W. C.

An hondred pounde, sayd the abbot.
The justyce said, Gyve him two.
Nay, be god, sayd the knyght,
Yet gete ye it not soo:

Though ye wolde gyve a thousande more,
Yet were 'ye' never the nere;
Shall there never be myn eyre,
Abbot, justyse, ne frere.

He sterte hym to a borde anone,
Tyll a table rounde,
And there he shoke out of a bagge
Even foure hondred pounde.

Have here thy golde, syr abbot, sayd the knyght,
Which that thou lentest me;
Haddest thou ben curteys at my comynge,
Rewarde sholdest thou have be.

The abbot sat styll, and ete no more,
For all his ryall chere,
He caste his hede on his sholdèr,
And fast began to stare.

Take me my golde agayne, sayd the abbot,
Syr justyce, that I toke the.
Not a peny, sayd the justyce,
By god, that dyed on a tree.

V. 148. grete. W. get. C. V. 150. thou. PCC.

" Syr abbot, and ye men of lawe,
Now have I holde my daye,
Now shall I have my londe agayne,
For ought that you can saye."

The knyght stert out of the dore,
Awaye was all his care,
And on he put his good clothynge,
The other he lefte there.

He wente hym forthe full mery syngynge,
As men have tolde in tale,
His lady met hym at the gate,
At home in ' Wierysdale.'

Welcome, my lorde, sayd his lady;
Syr, lost is all your good?
Be mery, dame, sayd the knyght,
And praye for Robyn Hode,

That ever his soule be in blysse,
He holpe me out of my tene;
Ne had not be his kyndenesse,
Beggers had we ben.

The abbot and I acordyd ben,
He is served of his pay,
The good yeman lent it me,
As I came by the way.

V. 180. Uterysdale. O. CC. Wierysdale is the name of a forest in Lancashire: though it appears, in a subsequent part of this poem, that the knights castle was in Nottinghamshire.

This knyght than dwelled fayre at home,
The soth for to say,
Tyll he had got foure hondreth pounde,
All redy for too paye.

He purveyed hym an hondred bowes,
The strènges [were] welle dyght,
An hondred shefe of arowes good,
The hedes burnyshed full bryght,

And every arowe an elle longe,
With pecocke well ydyght,
Inocked all with whyte sylvèr,
It was a semly syght.

He purveyed hym an hondreth men,
Well harneysed in that stede,
And hymselfe in that same sete,
And clothed in whyte and rede.

He bare a launsgay in his honde,
And a man ledde his male,
And reden with a lyght songe,
Unto Bernysdale.

As he went at a brydge ther was a wrastelyng,
And there taryed was he,
And there was all the best yemèn,
Of all the west countree.

V. 207. sute. C.

A full fayre game there was upset,
A whyte bull up ipyght;
A grete courser with sadle and brydil,
With golde burneyshed full bryght;

A payre of gloves, a rede golde rynge,
A pype of wyne, in good fay:
What man bereth him best, I wys,
The pryce shall bere away.

There was a yeman in that place,
And best worthy was he,
And for he was ferre and frend bestad,
Islayne he sholde have be.

The knyght had reuth of this yemàn,
In place where that he stode,
He said that yoman sholde have no harme,
For love of Robyn Hode.

The knyght presed into the place,
An hondred folowed hym 'fre,'
With bowes bent, and arowes sharpe,
For to shende that company.

They sholdred all, and made hym rome,
To wete what he wolde say,
He toke the yeman by the honde,
And gave hym all the playe;

V. 218. I up pyght. W. up ypyght. C. V. 234. fere. W. in fere. C.

He gave hym fyve marke for his wyne,
There it laye on the molde,
And bad it sholde be sette a broche,
Drynke who so wolde.

Thus longe taryed this gentyll knyght,
Tyll that playe was done,
So longe abode Robyn fastynge,
Thre houres after the none.

THE THYRDE FYTTE.

Lyth and lysten, gentyll men,
All that now be here,
Of Lytell Johan, that was the knyghtes man,
Good myrthe ye shall here.

It was upon a mery day,
That yonge men wolde go shete,
Lytell Johan fet his bowe anone,
And sayd he wolde them mete.

Thre tymes Lytell Johan shot about,
And alway cleft the wande,
The proude sheryf of Notyngham
By the markes gan stande.

V. 6. shote. W. V. 10. he sleste (sliced ?) W.

The sheryf swore a full grete othe,
By hym that dyed on a tree,
This man is the best archere
That yet sawe I me.

Say me now, wyght yonge man,
What is now thy name?
In what countre were thou born,
And where is thy wonnynge wan?

" In Holdernesse I was bore,
I wys all of my dame,
Men call me Reynolde Grenelefe,
Whan I am at hame."

" Say me, Reynaud Grenelefe,
Wolte thou dwell with me?
And every yere I wyll the gyve
Twenty marke to thy fee."

I have a mayster, sayd Lytell Johan,
A curteys knyght is he,
May ye gete leve of hym,
The better may it bee.

The sheryfe gate Lytell Johan
Twelve monethes of the knyght,
Therfore he gave him ryght anone
A good hors and a wyght.

V. 19. thou wast. C. wast thou. Wh.

Now is Lytel Johan the sheryffes man,
He gyve us well to spede,
But alway thought Lytell Johan
To quyte hym well his mede.

Now so god me helpe, sayd Lytel Johan,
And be my trewe lewtè,
I shall be the worste servaunte to hym
That ever yet had he.

It befell upon a wednesday,
The sheryfe on hontynge was gone,
And Lytel Johan lay in his bed,
And was foryete at home.

Therfore he was fastynge
Tyl it was past the none.
Good syr stuard, I pray the,
Geve me to dyne, sayd Lytel Johan,

It is to long for Greneleſe,
Fastynge so long to be;
Therfore I pray the, stuarde,
My dyner gyve thou me.

Shalt thou never ete ne drynke, sayd the stuarde,
Tyll my lord be come to towne.
I make myn avowe to god, sayd Lytell Johan,
I had lever to cracke thy crowne.

The butler was ful uncurteys,
There he stode on flore,
He sterte to the buttery,
And shet fast the dore.

Lytell Johan gave the buteler such a rap,
His backe yede nygh on two,
Tho he lyved an hundreth wynter,
The wors he sholde go.

He sporned the dore with his fote,
It went up wel and fyne,
And there he made a large lyveray
Both of ale and wyne.

Syth ye wyl not dyne, sayd Lytel Johan,
I shall gyve you to drynke,
And though ye lyve an hondred wynter,
On Lytell Johan ye shall thynk.

Lytell Johan ete, and Lytell [Johan] dronke,
The whyle that he wolde.
The sheryfe had in his kechyn a coke,
A stoute man and a bolde.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd the coke,
Thou arte a shrewde hynde,
In an housholde to dwel,
For to ask thus to dyne.

And there he lent Lytel Johan,
Good strokes thre.
I make myn avowe, sayd Lytell Johan,
These strokes lyketh well me.

Thou arte a bolde man and an hardy,
And so thynketh me;
And or I passe fro this place,
Asayed better shalt thou be.

Lytell Johan drewe a good swerde,
The coke toke another in honde;
They thought nothynge for to fle,
But styfly for to stonde.

There they fought sore togyder,
Two myle way and more,*
Myght neyther other harme done,
The mountenaunce of an houre.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Lytell Johan,
And be my trewe lewtè,
Thou art one of the best swerdemen,
That ever yet sawe I me.

Coowdest thou shote as well in a bowe,
To grene wood thou sholdest with me,
And two tymes in the yere thy clothynge
Ichaunged sholde be;

* i. e. while a man might have walked two miles and upward.

And every yere of Robyn Hode
Twenty marke to thy fee.
Put up thy swerde, sayd the coke,
And felowes wyll we be.

Then he fette to Lytell Johan
The numbles of a doo,
Good brede and full good wyne,
They ete and dranke therto.

And whan they had dronken well,
Ther trouthes togyder they plyght,
That they wolde be with Robyn
That ylke same day at nyght.

The dyde them to the tresure-hous,
As fast as they myght gone,
The lockes that were of good stele
They brake them everychone;

They toke away the sylver vessell,
And all that they myght get,
Peces, masars, and spones,
Wolde they non forgete;

Also they toke the good pence,
Thre hondred pounde and three;
And dyde them strayt to Robyn Hode,
Under the grene wode tre.

V. 121. hyed. C.

" God the save, my dere maystèr,
And Cryst the save and se."
And than sayd Robyn to Lytell Johan,
Welcome myght thou be;

And also be that fayre yemàn
Thou bryngest there with the.
What tydynges fro Notyngham?
Lytell Johan, tell thou me.

" Well the greteth the proude sheryfe,
And sende the here by me
His coke and his sylver vessell,
And thre hondred pounde and thre."

I make myn avow to god, sayd Robyn,
And to the trenytè,
It was never by his good wyll,
This good is come to me.

Lytell Johan hym there bethought,
On a shrewed wyle,
Fyve myle in the forest he ran,
Hym happed at his wyll;

Than he met the proud sheryf,
Huntynge with hounde and horne,
Lytell Johan coud his curteysye,
And kneled hym beforne:

V. 150. whyle. W.

" God the save, my dere maystèr,
And Cryst the save and see."
Raynolde Grenelefe, sayd the sheryfe,
Where hast thou nowe be?

" I have be in this forest,
A fayre syght can I se,
It was one of the fayrest syghtes
That ever yet sawe I me;

Yonder I se a ryght fayre hart,
His coloure is of grene,
Seven score of dere upon an herde
Be with hym all bedene;

His tynde are so sharp, maystèr,
Of sexty and well mo,
That I durst not shote for drede
Lest they wolde me sloo."

I make myn avowe to god, sayd the sheryf,
That syght wolde I fayn se.
" Buske you thyderwarde, my dere maystèr,
Anone, and wende with me."

The sheryfe rode, and Lytell Johan
Of fote he was full smarte,
And whan they came afore Robyn:
" Lo, here is the mayster harte!"

V. 163. syght. W. sightes. C.

Styll stode the proude sheryf,
A sory man was he:
" Wo worthe the, Raynolde Grenelefe!
Thou hast now betrayed me."

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Lytell Johan,
Mayster, ye be to blame,
I was mysserved of my dynere,
When I was with you at hame.

Soone he was to super sette,
And served with sylver whyte;
And whan the sheryf se his vessell,
For sorowe he myght not ete.

Make good chere, sayd Robyn Hode,
Sheryfe, for charytè,
And for the love of Lytell Johan,
Thy lyfe is graunted to the.

When they had supped well,
The day was all agone,
Robyn commaunded Lytell Johan
To drawe of his hosen and his shone,

His kyrtell and his cote a pye,
That was furred well fyne,
And take him a grene mantèll,
To lappe his body therin.

V. 183. wo the worth. W.

Robyn commaunded his wyght yong men,
Under the grene wood tre,
They shall lay in that same sorte;
That the sheryf myght them se.

All nyght laye that proud sheryf,
In his breche and in his sherte,
No wonder it was in grene wode,
Tho his sydes do smerte.

Make glad chere, sayd Robyn Hode,
Sheryfe, for charytè,
For this is our order I wys,
Under the grene wood tre.

This is harder order, sayd the sheryfe,
Than ony anker or frere;
For al the golde in mery Englonde
I wolde not longe dwell here.

All these twelve monethes, sayd Robyn,
Thou shalte dwell with me;
I shall the teche, proud sheryfe,
An outlawe for to be.

Or I here another nyght lye, sayd the sheryfe,
Robyn, nowe I praye the,
Smyte of my hede rather to-morne,
And I forgyve it the.

Lete me go, then sayd the sheryf,
For saynt Charytè,
And I wyll be thy best frende
That ever yet had the.

Thou shalte swere me an othe, sayd Robyn,
On my bryght bronde,
Thou shalt never awayte me scathe,
By water ne by londe;

And if thou fynde ony of my men,
By nyght or by day,
Upon thyne othe thou shalt swere,
To helpe them that thou may.

Now have the sheryf iswore his othe,
And home he began to gone,
He was as full of grene wode
As ever was hepe of stone.

THE FOURTH FYTTE.

The sheryf dwelled in Notynghame,
He was fayne that he was gone,
And Robyn and his mery men
Went to wode anone.

Go we to dyner, sayd Lytell Johan.
Robyn Hode sayd, Nay;
For I drede our lady be wroth with me,
For she sent me not my pay.

Have no dout, mayster, sayd Lytell Johan,
Yet is not the sonne at rest,
For I dare saye, and saufly swere,
The knyght is trewe and trust.

Take thy bowe in thy hande, sayd Robyn,
Let Moch wende with the,
And so shall Wyllyam Scathelock,
And no man abyde with me,

And walke up into the Sayles,
And to Watlynge-strete,
And wayte after 'some' unketh gest,
Up-chaunce ye may them mete.

Whether he be messengere,
Or a man that myrthes can,
Or yf he be a pore man,
Of my good he shall have some.

Forth then stert Lytel Johan,
Half in tray and tene,
And gyrde hym with a full good swerde,
Under a mantel of grene.

V. 19. such. W.

They went up to the Sayles,
These yemen all thre;
They loked est, they loked west,
They myght no man se.

But as 'they' loked in Bernysdale,
By the hye waye,
Than were they ware of two blacke monkes,
Eche on a good palferay.

Then bespake Lytell Johan,
To Much he gan say,
I dare lay my lyfe to wedde,
That these monkes have brought our pay.

Make glad chere, sayd Lytell Johan,
And frese our bowes of ewe,
And loke your hertes be seker and sad,
Your strynges trusty and trewe.

The monke hath fifty two men,
And seven somers full stronge,
There rydeth no bysshop in this londe
So ryally, I understond.

Brethern, sayd Lytell Johan,
Here are no more but we thre;
But we brynge them to dyner,
Our mayster dare we not se.

V. 33. he. Old copies.

Bende your bowes, sayd Lytell Johan,
Make all yon prese to stonde,
The formost monke, his lyfe and his deth
Is closed in my honde.

Abyde, chorle monke, sayd Lytell Johan,
No ferther that thou gone;
Yf thou doost, by dere worthy god,
Thy deth is in my honde.

And evyll thryfte on thy hede, sayd Lytell Johan,
Ryght under thy hattes bonde,
For thou hast made our mayster wroth,
He is fastynge so longe.

Who is your mayster? sayd the monke.
Lytell Johan sayd, Robyn Hode.
He is a stronge thefe, sayd the monke,
Of hym herd I never good.

Thou lyest, than sayd Lytell Johan,
And that shall rewe the;
He is a yeman of the forèst,
To dyne he hath bode the.

Much was redy with a bolte,
Redly and a none,
He set the monke to fore the brest,
To the grounde that he can gone.

V. 54. you. W. Make you yonder preste. C.
V. 75. set. 'shet'?

Of fyfty two wyght yonge men,
There abode not one,
Saf a lytell page, and a grome
To lede the somers with Johan.

They brought the monke to the lodge dore,
Whether he were loth or lefe,
For to speke with Robyn Hode,
Maugre in theyr tethe.

Robyn dyde adowne his hode,
The monke whan that he se;
The monke was not so curteyse,
His hode then let he be.

He is a chorle, mayster, by dere worthy god,
Than said Lytell Johan.
Thereof no force, sayd Robyn,
For curteysy can he none.

How many men, sayd Robyn,
Had this monke, Johan?
" Fyfty and two whan that we met,
But many of them be gone."

Let blowe a horne, sayd Robin,
That felaushyp may us knowe;
Seven score of wyght yemen,
Came pryckynge on a rowe,

V. 77. yemen. C. V. 80. Lytell Johan. O. CC.

And everych of them a good mantèll,
Of scarlet and of raye,
All they came to good Robyn,
To wyte what he wolde say.

They made the monke to wasshe and wype,
And syt at his denere,
Robyn Hode and Lytel Johan
They served ' him' bothe in fere.

Do gladly, monke, sayd Robyn.
Gramercy, syr, said he.
" Where is your abbay, whan ye are at home,
And who is your avowè?"

Saynt Mary abbay, sayd the monke,
Though I be symple here.
In what offyce? sayd Robyn.
" Syr, the hye selerer."

Ye be the more welcome, sayd Robyn,
So ever mote I the.
Fyll of the best wyne, sayd Robyn,
This monke shall drynke to me.

But I have grete mervayle, sayd Robyn,
Of all this longe day,
I drede our lady be wroth with me,
She sent me not my pay.

V. 108. them. O. CC.

Have no doute, mayster, sayd Lytell Johan,
Ye have no nede I saye,
This monke it hath brought, I dare well swere,
For he is of her abbay.

And she was a borowe, sayd Robyn,
Betwene a knyght and me,
Of a lytell money that I hym lent,
Under the grene wode tree;

And yf thou hast that sylver ibroughte,
I praye the let me se,
And I shall helpe the eftsones,
Yf thou have nede of me.

The monke swore a full grete othe,
With a sory chere,
Of the borowehode thou spekest to me,
Herde I never ere.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
Monke, thou arte to blame,
For god is holde a ryghtwys man,
And so is his dame.

Thou toldest with thyn owne tonge,
Thou may not say nay,
How thou arte her servaunt,
And servest her every day:

And thou art made her messengere,
My money for to pay,
Therfore I cun the more thanke,
Thou arte come at thy day.

What is in your cofers? sayd Robyn,
Trewe than tell thou me.
Syr, he sayd, twenty marke,
Al so mote I the.

Yf there be no more, sayd Robyn,
I wyll not one peny;
Yf thou hast myster of ony more,
Syr, more I shall lende to the;

And yf I fynde more, sayd Robyn,
I wys thou shalte it forgone;
For of thy spendynge sylver, monk,
Therof wyll I ryght none.

Go nowe forthe, Lytell Johan,
And the trouth tell thou me;
If there be no more but twenty marke,
No peny that I se.

Lytell Johan spred his mantell downe,
As he had done before,
And he tolde out of the monkes male,
Eyght hundreth pounde and more.

V. 149. nade. W. not in C. V. 172. Eyght pounde. W.

Lytell Johan let it lye full styll,
And went to his mayster in hast;
Syr, he sayd, the monke is trewe ynowe,
Our lady hath doubled your cost.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
Monke, what tolde I the?
Our lady is the trewest womàn,
That ever yet founde I me.

By dere worthy god, sayd Robyn,
To seche all Englond thorowe,
Yet founde I never to my pay
A moche better borowe.

Fyll of the best wyne, do hym drynke, sayd Robyn;
And grete well thy lady hende,
And yf she have nede of Robyn Hode,
A frende she shall hym fynde;

And yf she nedeth ony more sylvèr,
Come thou agayne to me,
And, by this token she hath me sent,
She shall have such thre.

The monke was going to London ward,
There to holde grete mote,
The knyght that rode so hye on hors,
To brynge hym under fote.

Whether be ye away? sayd Robyn.
" Syr, to maners in this londe,
Too reken with our reves,
That have done moch wronge."

" Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And harken to my tale,
A better yeman I knowe none,
To seke a monkes male."

How moch is in yonder other 'cofer?' sayd Robyn,
The soth must we see.
By our lady, than sayd the monke,
That were no curteysye,

To bydde a man to dyner,
And syth hym bete and bynde.
It is our olde maner, sayd Robyn,
To leve but lytell behynde.

The monke toke the hors with spore,
No lenger wolde he abyde.
Aske to drynke, than sayd Robyn,
Or that ye forther ryde.

Nay, for god, than sayd the monke,
Me reweth I cam so nere,
For better chepe I myght have dyned,
In Blythe or in Dankestere.

V. 205. corser. W. courser. C.

Grete well your abbot, sayd Robyn,
And your pryour, I you pray,
And byd hym send me such a monke,
To dyner every day.

Now lete we that monke be styll,
And speke we of that knyght,
Yet he came to holde his day
Whyle that it was lyght.

He dyde hym streyt to Bernysdale,
Under the grene wode tre,
And he founde there Robyn Hode,
And all his mery meynè.

The knyght lyght downe of his good palfràу,
Robyn whan he gan see,
So curteysly he dyde adoune his hode,
And set hym on his knee.

" God the save, good Robyn Hode,
And al this company."
" Welcome be thou, gentyll knyght,
And ryght welcome to me."

Than bespake hym Robyn Hode,
To that knyght so fre,
What nede dryveth the to grene wode?
I pray the, syr knyght, tell me.

And welcome be thou, gentyl knyght,
Why hast thou be so longe?
" For the abbot and the hye justyce
Wolde have had my londe."

Hast thou thy lond agayne? sayd Robyn,
Treuth than tell thou me.
Ye, for god, sayd the knyght,
And that thanke I god and the.

But take not a grefe, I have be so longe;
I came by a wrastelynge,
And there I dyd holpe a pore yemàn,
With wronge was put behynde.

Nay, for god, sayd Robyn,
Syr knyght, that thanke I the;
What man that helpeth a good yemàn,
His frende than wyll I be.

Have here foure hondred pounde, than sayd the knyght,
The whiche ye lent to me;
And here is also twenty marke
For your curteysy.

Nay, for god, than sayd Robyn,
Thou broke it well for ay,
For our lady, by her selerer,
Hath sent to me my pay;

V. 249. gayne. W.
V. 253. But take not a grefe, sayd the knyght,
That I have be so longe. O. CC.

And yf I toke it twyse,
A shame it were to me:
But trewely, gentyll knyght,
Welcom arte thou to me.

Whan Robyn had tolde his tale,
He leugh and had good chere.
By my trouthe, then sayd the knyght,
Your money is redy here.

Broke it well, sayd Robyn,
Thou gentyll knyght so fre;
And welcome be thou, gentill knyght,
Under my trystell tree.

But what shall these bowes do? sayd Robyn,
And these arowes ifedered fre?
By god, than sayd the knyght,
A pore present to the.

" Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And go to my treasurè,
And brynge me there foure hondred pounde,
The monke over-tolde it me.

Have here foure hondred pounde,
Thou gentyll knyght and trewe,
And bye hors and harnes good,
And gylte thy spores all newe:

V. 269. I twyse. W. V. 280. thi trusty. C.

And yf thou fayle ony spendynge,
Com to Robyn Hode,
And by my trouth thou shalt none fayle
The whyles I have any good.

And broke well thy four hundred pound,
Whiche I lent to the,
And make thy selfe no more so bare,
By the counsell of me."

Thus than holpe hym good Robyn,
The knyght all of his care.
God, that sytteth in heven hye,
Graunte us well to fare.

THE FYFTH FYTTE.

Now hath the knyght his leve itake,
And wente hym on his way;
Robyn Hode and his mery men
Dwelled styll full many a day.

Lyth and lysten, gentil men,
And herken what I shall say,
How the proud sheryfe of Notyngham
Dyde crye a full fayre play;

V. 302. this care. W. V. 303. syt. W.

That all the best archers of the north
Sholde come upon a day,
And ‘ he’ that shoteth ‘ alder’ best
The game shall bere away.

“ He that shoteth ‘ alder’ best
Furthest fayre and lowe,
At a payre of fynly buttes,
Under the grene wode shawe,

A ryght good arowe he shall have,
The shaft of sylver whyte,
The heade and the feders of ryche rede golde,
In Englond is none lyke.”

This then herde good Robyn,
Under his trystell tre:
“ Make you redy, ye wyght yonge men,
That shotynge wyll I se.

Buske you, my mery yonge men,
Ye shall go with me;
And I wyll wete the shryves fayth,
Trewe and yf he be.”

Whan they had theyr bowes ibent,
Theyr takles fedred fre,
Seven score of wyght yonge men
Stode by Robyns kne.

V. 11. And that shoteth al ther best. W.
And they that shote al of the best. C.
V. 13. al theyre. W. al of the. C.

Whan they cam to Notyngham,
The buttes were fayre and longe,
Many was the bolde archere
That shoted with bowes stronge.

" There shall but syx shote with me,
The other shal kepe my hede,
And stande with good bowes bent
That I be not desceyved."

The fourth outlawe his bowe gan bende,
And that was Robyn Hode,
And that behelde the proude sheryfe,
All by the but he stode.

Thryes Robyn shot about,
And alway he slist the wand,
And so dyde good Gylberte,
With the whyte hande.

Lytell Johan and good Scatheloke
Were archers good and fre;
Lytell Much and good Reynolde,
The worste wolde they not be.

Whan they had shot aboute,
These archours fayre and good,
Evermore was the best,
Forsoth, Robyn Hode.

V. 46. they slist. W. he clefte. C.

Hym was delyvered the goode aròw,
For best worthy was he;
He toke the yeft so curteysly,
To grene wode wolde he.

They cryed out on Robyn Hode,
And great hornes gan they blowe.
Wo worth the, treason! sayd Robyn,
Full evyl thou art to knowe.

And wo be thou, thou proud sheryf,
Thus gladdynge thy gest,
Other wyse thou behote me
In yonder wylde forest;

But had I the in grene wode,
Under my trystell tre,
Thou sholdest leve me a better wedde
Than thy trewe lewtè.

Full many a bowe there was bent,
And arowes let they glyde,
Many a kyrtell there was rent,
And hurt many a syde.

The outlawes shot was so stronge,
That no man myght them dryve,
And the proud sheryfes men
They fled away full blyve.

V. 80. belyve. C.

Robyn sawe the busshement to-broke,
In grene wode he wolde have be,
Many an arowe there was shot
Amonge that company.

Lytell Johan was hurte full sore,
With an arowe in his kne,
That he myght neyther go nor ryde;
It was full grete pytè.

Mayster, then sayd Lytell Johan,
If ever thou lovest me,
And for that ylke lordes love,
That dyed upon a tre,

And for the medes of my servyce,
That I have served the,
Lete never the proude sheryf
Alyve now fynde me;

But take out thy browne swerde,
And smyte all of my hede,
And gyve me woundes dede and wyde,
No lyfe on me be lefte.

I wolde not that, sayd Robyn,
Johan, that thou were slawe,
For all the golde in mery Englond,
Though it lay now on a rawe

V. 100. That I after eate no bread. C.

God forbede, sayd lytell Much,
That dyed on a tre,
That thou sholdest, Lytell Johan,
Parte our company.

Up he toke him on his backe,
And bare hym well a myle,
Many a tyme he layd hym downe,
And shot another whyle.

Then was there a fayre castèll,
A lytell within the wode,
Double-dyched it was about,
And walled, by the rode;

And there dwelled that gentyll knyght,
Syr Rychard at the Lee,
That Robyn had lent his good,
Under the grene wode tree.

In he toke good Robyn,
And all his company:
" Welcome be thou, Robyn Hode,
Welcome arte thou [to] me;

And moche [I] thanke the of thy comfort,
And of thy curteysye,
And of thy grete kyndenesse,
Under the grene wode tre;

I love no man in all this worlde
So moch as I do the;
For all the proud sheryf of Notyngham,
Ryght here shalt thou be.

Shyt the gates, and drawe the bridge,
And let no man com in;
And arme you well, and make you redy,
And to the walle ye wynne.

For one thyng, Robyn, I the behote,
I swere by saynt Quyntyn,
These twelve dayes thou wonest with me,
To suppe, ete, and dyne."

Bordes were layed, and clothes spred,
Reddely and anone;
Robyn Hode and his mery men
To mete gan they gone.

THE SYXTE FYTTE.

Lythe and lysten, gentylmen,
And herken unto your songe;
How the proude sheryfe of Notyngham,
And men of armes stronge,

Full faste came to the hye sheryfe,
The countre up to rout,
And they beset the knyghts castèll,
The walles all about.

The proude sheryf loude gan crye,
And sayd, Thou traytour knyght,
Thou kepeste here the kynges enemye,
Agayne the lawes and ryght.

" Syr, I wyll avowe that I have done,
The dedes that here be dyght,
Upon all the londes that I have,
As I am a trewe knyght.

Wende forthe, syrs, on your waye,
And doth no more to me,
Tyll ye wytte our kynges wyll
What he woll say to the."

The sheref thus had his answere,
With out ony leasynge,
Forthe he yode to London toune,
All for to tel our kynge.

There he tolde him of that knyght,
And eke of Robyn Hode,
And also of the bolde archeres,
That noble were and good.

V. 14. thou. W.

" He wolde avowe that he had done,
To mayntayne the outlawes stronge,
He wolde be lorde, and set you at nought,
In all the north londe."

I woll be at Notyngham, sayd the kynge,
Within this fourtynyght,
And take I wyll Robyn Hode,
And so I wyll that knyght.

Go home, thou proud sheryf,
And do as I bydde the,
And ordayne good archeres inowe,
Of all the wyde countree.

The sheryf had his leve itake,
And went hym on his way;
And Robyn Hode to grene wode [went]
Upon a certayn day;

And Lytell Johan was hole of the arowe,
That shote was in his kne,
And dyde hym strayte to Robyn Hode,
Under the grene wode tre.

Robyn Hode walked in the foreste,
Under the leves grene,
The proud sheryfe of Notyngham,
Therfore he had grete tene.

V. 38. the bydde. OCC.

The sheryf there fayled of Robyn Hode,
He myght not have his pray,
Then he awayted that gentyll knyght,
Bothe by nyght and by daye.

Ever he awayted that gentyll knyght,
Syr Rychard at the Lee;
As he went on haukynge by the ryver syde,
And let his haukes flee,

Toke he there this gentyll knyght,
With men of armes stronge,
And lad hym home to Notyngham warde,
Ibonde both fote and honde.

The sheryf swore a full grete othe,
By hym that dyed on a tre,
He had lever than an hondrede pounde,
That Robyn Hode had he.

Then the lady, the knyghtes wyfe,
A fayre lady and fre,
She set her on a gode palfrày,
To grene wode anon rode she.

When she came to the forèst,
Under the grene wode tre,
Founde she there Robyn Hode,
And all his fayre meynè.

V. 64. honde and fote. W. foote and hande. C.
V. 68. That he had Robyn Hode. W.

" God the save, good Robyn Hode,
And all thy company;
For our dere ladyes love,
A bone graunte thou me.

Let thou never my wedded lorde
Shamfully slayne to be;
He is fast ibounde to Notyngham warde,
For the love of the."

Anone then sayd good Robyn,
To that lady fre,
What man hath your lorde itake?
The proude shirife, than sayd she.

[The proude sheryfe hath hym itake]
Forsoth as I the say;
He is not yet thre myles,
Passed on 'his' waye.

Up then sterte good Robyn,
As a man that had be wode:
" Buske you, my mery younge men,
For hym that dyed on a rode;

V. 77. God the good Robyn. W. V. 79. lady. W. V. 81. Late. V. 82. Shamly I slayne be. W. V. 88. For soth as I the say. W. V. 92. your. W. You may them over take. C.

And he that this sorowe forsaketh,
By hym that dyed on a tre,
And by him that al thinges maketh,
No lenger shall dwell with me."

Sone there were good bowes ibent,
Mo than seven score,
Hedge ne dyche spared they none,
That was them before.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
The knyght wolde I fayn se,
And yf I may hym take,
Iquyt than shall he bee.

And whan they came to Notyngham,
They walked in the strete,
And with the proud sheryf, I wys,
Sone gan they mete.

Abyde, thou proud sheryf, he sayd,
Abyde and speake with me,
Of some tydynges of our kynge,
I wolde fayne here of the.

This seven yere, by dere worthy god,
Ne yede I so fast on fote,
I make myn avowe to god, thou proud sheryfe,
'It' is not for thy good.

V. 99. 100. Shall he never in grene wode be Nor longer dwell with me. W. V. 108. it. W. V. 120. At. W. That. C.—good] boote. Wh.

Robyn bent a good bowe,
An arrowe he drewe at his wyll,
He hyt so the proud sheryf,
Upon the grounde he lay full styll;

And or he myght up aryse,
On his fete to stonde,
He smote of the sheryves hede,
With his bryght bronde.

" Lye thou there, thou proud sheryf,
Evyll mote thou thryve;
There myght no man to the trust,
The whyles thou were alyve."

His men drewe out theyr bryght swerdes,
That were so sharpe and kene,
And layde on the sheryves men,
And dryved them downe bydene.

Robyn stert to that knyght,
And cut a two his bonde,
And toke hym in his hand a bowe,
And bade hym by hym stonde.

" Leve thy hors the behynde,
And lerne for to renne;
Thou shalt with me to grene wode,
Through myre, mosse and fenne;

V. 138. hoode. W. bande. C.

Thou shalt with me to grene wode,
Without ony leasynge,
Tyll that I have gete us grace,
Of Edwarde our comly kynge."

THE SEVENTH FYTTE.

The kynge came to Notynghame,
With knyghtes in grete araye,
For to take that gentyll knyght,
And Robyn Hode, yf he may.

He asked men of that countrè,
After Robyn Hode,
And after that gentyll knyght,
That was so bolde and stout.

Whan they had tolde hym the case,
Our kynge understonde ther tale,
And seased in his honde
The knyghtes londes all,

All the passe of Lancasshyre,
He went both ferre and nere,
Tyll he came to Plomton parke,
He faylyd many of his dere.

V. 4. and yf. W.

There our kynge was wont to se
Herdes many one,
He coud unneth fynde one dere,
That bare ony good horne.

The kynge was wonder wroth withall,
And swore by the trynytè,
" I wolde I had Robyn Hode,
With eyen I myght hym se;

And he that wolde smyte of the knyghtes hede,
And brynge it to me,
He shall have the knyghtes londes,
Syr Rycharde at the Le;

I gyve it hym with my chartèr,
And sele it with my honde,
To have and holde for ever-more,
In all mery Englonde."

Than bespake a fayre olde knyght,
That was treue in his fay,
A, my lege lorde the kynge,
One worde I shall you say;

There is no man in this countrè
May have the knyghtes londes,
Whyle Robyn Hode may ryde or gone,
And bere a bowe in his hondes;

That he ne shall lese his hede,
That is the best ball in his hode:
Give it no man, my lorde the kynge,
That ye wyll any good.

Half a yere dwelled our comly kynge,
In Notyngham, and well more,
Coude he not here of Robyn Hode,
In what countre that he were;

But alway went good Robyn
By halke and eke by hyll,
And alway slewe the kynges dere,
And welt them at his wyll.

Than bespake a proude fostere,
That stode by our kynges kne,
If ye wyll se good Robyn,
Ye must do after me;

Take fyve of the best knyghtes
That be in your lede,
And walke downe by 'yon' abbay,
And gete you monkes wede.

And I wyll be your ledes man,
And lede you the way,
And or ye come to Notyngham,
Myn hede then dare I lay,

V. 59. your. OCC.

That ye shall mete with good Robyn,
On lyve yf that he be,
Or ye come to Notyngham,
With eyen ye shall hym se.

Full hastly our kynge was dyght,
So were his knyghtes fyve,
Everych of them in monkes wede,
And hasted them thyder blyth.

Our kynge was grete above his cole,
A brode hat on his crowne,
Ryght as he were abbot-lyke,
They rode up in-to the towne.

Styf botes our kynge had on,
Forsoth as I you say,
He rode syngynge to grene wode,
The covent was clothed in graye,

His male hors, and his grete somèrs,
Folowed our kynge behynde,
Tyll they came to grene wode,
A myle under the lynde,

There they met with good Robyn,
Stondynge on the waye,
And so dyde many a bolde archere,
For soth as I you say.

Robyn toke the kynges hors,
Hastely in that stede,
And sayd, Syr abbot, by your leve,
A whyle ye must abyde;

We be yemen of this foreste,
Under the grene wode tre,
We lyve by our kynges dere,
Other shyft have not we;

And ye have chyrches and rentes both,
And gold full grete plentè;
Gyve us some of your spendynge,
For saynt Charytè. *

Than bespake our cumly kynge,
Anone than sayd he,
I brought no more to grene wode,
But forty pounde with me;

V. 96. Under the grene wode tre. W.

* This saint is also mentioned by Chaucer, in the Sompnours tale; by Spenser, in his 5th eclogue; in the Downfall of Robert earl of Huntington, 1601; and in one of Ophelias songs in Hamlet. (See a note upon this last passage in the edition of 1793, vol. xv. p. 163.) Mr. Steevens's assertion that "Saint Charity is a known saint among the Roman Catholics," may be supported by infallible authority. "We read," says Dr. Douglas, "in the Martyrology on the first of August—Romæ passio sanctarum virginum, Fidei, Spei, et Charitatis, quæ sub Hadriano principe martyris coronam adeptæ sunt." Criterion, p. 68. Pierre Nadal, commonly called Petrus de Natalibus, in his Catalogus Sanctorum, has given the history of the saints, Faith, Hope, and Charity, the daughters of St. Sophia (or Wisdom). Nothing can be too absurd for superstition.

I have layne at Notyngham,
This fourtynyght with our kynge,
And spent I have full moche good,
On many a grete lordynge;

And I have but forty pounde,
No more than have I me,
But yf I had an hondred pounde,
I would geve it to the.

Robyn toke the forty pounde,
And departed it in two partye,
Halfendell he gave his mery men,
And bad them mery to be.

Full curteysly Robyn gan say,
Syr, have this for your spendyng,
We shall mete a nother day.
Gramercy, than sayd our kynge;

But well the greteth Edwarde our kynge,
And sent to the his seale,
And byddeth the com to Notyngham,
Both to mete and mele.

He toke out the brode tarpe,
And sone he lete hym se;
Robyn coud his courteysy,
And set hym on his kne:

V. 112. I vouche it halfe on the. W. V. 125. seale. C.

" I love no man in all the worlde
So well as I do my kynge,
Welcome is my lordes seale;
And, monke, for thy tydynge,

Syr abbot, for thy tydynges,
To day thou shalt dyne with me,
For the love of my kynge,
Under my trystell tre."

Forth he lad our comly kynge,
Full fayre by the honde,
Many a dere there was slayne,
And full fast dyghtande.

Robyn toke a full grete horne,
And loude he gan blowe,
Seven score of wyght yonge men,
Came redy on a rowe,

All they kneeled on theyr kne,
Full fayre before Robyn.
The kynge sayd hymselfe untyll,
And swore by saynt Austyn,

Here is a wonder semely syght,
Me thynketh, by goddes pyne;
His men are more at his byddynge,
Then my men be at myn.

Full hastly was theyr dyner idyght,
And therto gan they gone,
They served our kynge with al theyr myght,
Both Robyn and Lytell Johan.

Anone before our kynge was set
The fatte venyson,
The good whyte brede, the good red wyne,
And therto the fyne ale browne.

Make good chere, sayd Robyn,
Abbot, for charytè;
And for this ylke tydynge,
Blyssed mote thou be.

Now shalte thou se what lyfe we lede,
Or thou hens wende,
Than thou may enfourme our kynge,
Whan ye togyder lende.

Up they sterte all in hast,
Theyr bowes were smartly bent,
Our kynge was never so sore agast,
He wende to have be shente.

Two yerdes there were up set,
There to gan they gange;
By fifty pase, our kynge sayd,
The merkes were to longe.

V. 160. and browne. W.

On every syde a rose garlonde,
They shot under the lyne.
Who so fayleth of the rose garlonde, sayd Robyn,
His takyll he shall tyne,

And yelde it to his mayster,
Be it never so fyne,
For no man wyll I spare,
So drynke I ale or wyne.

And bere a buffet on his hede,
I wys ryght all bare.
And all that fell in Robyns lote,
He smote them wonder sare.

Twyse Robyn shot aboute,
And ever he cleved the wande,
And so dyde good Gylberte,
With the whyte hand.

Lytell Johan and good Scathelocke,
For nothyng wolde they spare,
When they fayled of the garlonde,
Robyn smote them full sare.

At the last shot that Robyn shot,
For all his frendes fare,
Yet he fayled of the garlonde,
Thre fyngers and mare.

V. 186. A wys. W. For that shall be his fyne. C.
V. 192. good whyte. W. lilly white. C.

Than bespake good Gylberte,
And thus he gan say:
Mayster, he sayd, your takyll is lost,
Stand forth and take your pay.

If it be so, sayd Robyn,
That may no better be;
Syr abbot, I delyver the myn arowe,
I pray the, syr, serve thou me.

It falleth not for myn order, sayd our kynge,
Robyn, by thy leve,
For to smyte no good yemàn,
For doute I sholde hym greve.

Smyte on boldely, sayd Robyn,
I give the large leve.
Anone our kynge, with that worde,
He folde up his sleve,

And sych a buffet he gave Robyn,
To grounde he yede full nere.
I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
Thou arte a stalworthe frere;

There is pith in thyn arme, sayd Robyn,
I trowe thou canst well shote.
Thus our kynge and Robyn Hode
Togeder than they met.

Robyn behelde our comly kynge
Wystly in the face,
So dyde syr Richarde at the Le,
And kneled downe in that place;

And so dyde all the wylde outlawes,
Whan they se them knele.
" My lorde the kynge of Englonde,
Now I knowe you well."

Mercy, then Robyn sayd to our kynge,
Under your trystyll tre,
Of thy goodnesse and thy grace,
For my men and me!

Yes, for god, sayd Robyn,
And also god me save;
I aske mercy, my lorde the kynge,
And for my men I crave.

Yes, for god, than sayd our kynge
Thy peticion I graunt the,
With that thou leve the grene wode,
And all thy company;

And come home, syr, to my courte,
And there dwell with me.
I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
And ryght so shall it be;

V. 246. And therto sent I me. W.

I wyll come to your courte,
Your servyse for to se,
And brynge with me of my men
Seven score and thre.

But me lyke well your servyse,
I come agayne full soone,
And shote at the donne dere,
As I am wonte to done.

THE EIGHTH FYTTE.

Haste thou ony grene cloth, sayd our kynge,
That thou wylte sell nowe to me?
Ye, for god, sayd Robyn,
Thyrty yerdes and thre.

Robyn, sayd our kynge,
Now pray I the,
To sell me some of that cloth,
To me and my meynè.

Yes, for god, then sayd Robyn,
Or elles I were a fole;
Another day ye wyll me clothe,
I trowe, ayenst the Yole.

V. 9. good. OCC.

The kynge kest of his cote then,
A grene garment he dyde on,
And every knyght had so, I wys,
They clothed them full soone.

Whan they were clothed in Lyncolne grene,
They kest away theyr graye.
Now we shall to Notyngham,
All thus our kynge gan say.

Theyr bowes bente and forth they went,
Shotynge all in-fere,
Towarde the towne of Notyngham,
Outlawes as they were.

Our kynge and Robyn rode togyder,
For soth as I you say,
And they shote plucke-buffet,
As they went by the way;

And many a buffet our kynge wan,
Of Robyn Hode that day;
And nothynge spared good Robyn
Our kynge in his pay.

So god me helpe, sayd our kynge,
Thy game is nought to lere,
I sholde not get a shote of the,
Though I shote all this yere.

V. 16. Another had full soue. W.

All the people of Notyngham
They stode and behelde,
They sawe nothynge but mantels of grene
That covered all the felde;

Than every man to other gan say,
I drede our kynge be slone;
Come Robyn Hode to the towne, I wys,
On lyve he leveth not one.

Full hastly they began to fle,
Both yemen and knaves,
And olde wyves that myght evyll goo,
They hypped on theyr staves.

The kynge loughe full fast,
And commanded theym agayne;
When they se our comly kynge,
I wys they were full fayne.

They ete and dranke, and made them glad,
And sange with notes hye.
Than bespake our comly kynge
To syr Rycharde at the Lee:

He gave hym there his londe agayne,
A good man he bad hym be.
Robyn thanked our comly kynge,
And set hym on his kne.

V. 44. Lefte never one. W. V. 49. lughe. W.

Had Robyn dwelled in the kynges courte
But twelve monethes and thre,
That he had spent an hondred pounde,
And all his mennes fe.

In every place where Robyn came,
Ever more he layde downe,
Both for knyghtes and for squyres,
To gete hym grete renowne.

By than the yere was all agone,
He had no man but twayne
Lytell Johan and good Scathelocke,
Wyth hym all for to gone.

Robyn sawe yonge men shote,
Full fayre upon a day,
Alas! than sayd good Robyn,
My welthe is went away.

Somtyme I was an archere good,
A styffe and eke a stronge,
I was commytted the best archere,
That was in mery Englonde.

Alas! then sayd good Robyn,
Alas and well a woo!
Yf I dwele lenger with the kynge,
Sorowe wyll me sloo.

V. 74. ferre. W. V. 75. commended for. C.

Forth than went Robyn Hode,
Tyll he came to our kynge:
" My lorde the kynge of Englonde,
Graunte me myn askynge.

I made a chapell in Bernysdale,
That semely is to se,
It is of Mary Magdalene,
And thereto wolde I be;

I myght never in this seven nyght,
No tyme to slepe ne wynke,
Nother all these seven dayes,
Nother ete ne drynke.

Me longeth sore to Bernysdale,
I may not be therfro,
Barefote and wolwarde I have hyght
Thyder for to go."

Yf it be so, than sayd our kynge,
It may no better be;
Seven nyght I gyve the leve,
No lengre, to dwell fro me.

Gramercy, lorde, then sayd Robyn,
And set hym on his kne;
He toke his leve full courteysly,
To grene wode then went he.

Whan he came to grene wode,
In a mery mornynge,
There he herde the notes small
Of byrdes mery syngynge.

It is ferre gone, sayd Robyn,
That I was last here,
Me lyste a lytell for to shote
At the donne dere.

Robyn slewe a full grete harte,
His horne than gan he blow,
That all the outlawes of that forèst,
That horne coud they knowe,

And gadred them togyder,
In a lytell throwe,
Seven score of wight yonge men,
Came redy on a rowe;

And fayre dyde of theyr hodes,
And set them on theyr kne:
Welcome, they sayd, our maystèr,
Under this grene wode tre.

Robyn dwelled in grene wode,
Twenty yere and two,
For all drede of Edwarde our kynge,
Agayne wolde he not goo.

Yet he was begyled, I wys,
Through a wycked womàn,
The pryoresse of Kyrkesly,
That nye was of his kynne,

For the love of a knyght,
Syr Roger of Donkestèr,
That was her owne speciall,
Full evyll mote they ' fare.'

They toke togyder theyr counsell
Robyn Hode for to sle,
And how they myght best do that dede,
His banis for to be.

Than bespake good Robyn,
In place where as he stode,
To morow I muste to Kyrkesley,
Craftely to be leten blode.

Syr Roger of Donkestere,
By the pryoresse he lay,
And there they betrayed good Robyn Hode,
Through theyr false playe.

Cryst have mercy on his soule,
That dyed on the rode!
For he was a good outlawe,
And dyde pore men moch god.

V. 138. donkesley. W. V. 140. the. OCC.



II.

ROBYN HODE [AND THE POTTER].

This curious, and hitherto unpublished, and even unheard of old piece is given from a manuscript, among bishop Mores collections, in the public library of the university of Cambridge (Ee. 4. 35). The writing, which is evidently that of a vulgar and illiterate person, appears to be of the age of Henry the seventh, that is about the year 1500; but the composition (which he has irremediably corrupted) is probably of an earlyer period, and much older, no doubt, than "The play of Robyn Hode," which seems allusive to the same story. At the end of the original is "Expleycyt Robyn Hode."

In schomer, when the leves spryng,
The bloschems on every bowe,
So merey doyt the berdys syng,
Yn wodys merey now.

Herkens, god yemen,
Comley, cortessey, and god,
On of the best that yever bar bou,
Hes name was Roben Hode.

Roben Hood was the yemans name,
That was boyt corteys and fre;
For the loffe of owr ladey,
All wemen werschep 'he.'

Bot as the god yeman stod on a day,
Among hes mery manèy,
He was war of a prowd potter,
Cam dryfyng owyr the 'ley.'

Yonder comet a prod potter, seyde Roben,
That long hayt hantyd this wey,
He was never so corteys a man
On peney of pawage to pay.

V. 12. ye. V. 16. lefe. V. 17. syde.

Y met hem bot at Wentbreg, seyde Lytyll John,
And therfor yeffell mot he the,
Seche thre strokes he me gafe,
Yet they cleffe by my seydys.

Y ley forty shillings, seyde Lytyll John,
To pay het thes same day,
Ther ys nat a man among hus all
A wed schall make hem ley.

Her ys forty shillings, seyde Robèn,
Mor, and thow dar say,
That y schall make that prowde pottèr,
A wed to me schall he ley.

Ther thes money they leyde,
They toke het a yeman to kepe;
Roben befor the potter he breyde,
'And up to hem can lepe.'

Handys apon hes horse he leyde,
And bad 'hem' stonde foll stell.
The potter schorteley to hem seyde,
Felow, what ys they well?

All thes thre yer, and mor, potter, he seyde,
Thow hast hantyd thes wey,
Yet wer tow never so cortys a man
One peney of pauage to pay.

V. 21. syde. V. 27. hys. V. 28. leffe. V. 36. A bad hem stond stell. V. 38. the potter.

What ys they name, seyde the potter,
For pauage thow aske of me?
" Roben Hod ys mey name,
A wed schall thow leffe me."

Wed well y non leffe, seyde the potter,
Nor pavag well y non pay;
Awey they honde fro mey horse,
Y well the tene eyls, be mey fay.

The potter to hes cart he went,
He was not to seke,
A god to-hande staffe therowt he hent,
Befor Roben he ' lepe.'

Roben howt with a swerd bent,
A bokeler en hes honde [therto];
The potter to Roben he went,
And seyde, Felow, let mey horse go.

Togeder then went thes two yemen,
Het was a god seyt to se;
Therof low Robyn hes men,
Ther they stod onder a tre.

Leytell John to hes felowhes seyde,
Yend potter welle steffeley stonde.
The potter, with a caward stroke,
Smot the bokeler owt of hes honde;

V. 56. leppyd. V. 65. felow he.

And ar Roben meyt get hen agen,
Hes bokeler at hes fette,
The potter yn the neke hem toke,
To the gronde sone he yede.

That saw Roben hes men,
As thay stode ender a bow:
Let us helpe owr master, seyed Lytell John,
Yonder potter els well hem sclo.

Thes yemen went with a breyde,
To 'ther' master they cam.
Leytell John to hes master seyde,
Ho haet the wager won?

Schall y haff yowr forty shillings, seyde Lytel
Or ye, master, schall haffe myne? [John,
Yeff they wer a hundred, seyde Robèn,
Y feythe, they ben all theyne.

Het ys fol leytell cortesey, seyde the potter,
As y haffe harde weyse men saye,
Yeff a por yeman com drywyng ower the wey,
To let hem of hes gorney.

Be mey trowet, thow seys soyt, seyde Roben,
Thow seys god yemenrey;
And thow dreyffe forthe yevery day,
Thow schalt never be let for me.

V. 69. A. V. 76. seyde hels. V. 77. went yemen.
V. 78. thes. V. 82. lytl. V. 90. yemerey.

Y well prey the, god potter,
A felischepe well thow haffe?
Geffe me they clothyng, and thow schalt haſe
Y well go to Notynggam. [myne;

Y grant therto, seyde the potter,
Thow schalt feynde me a felow gode;
Bot thow can sell mey pottes well,
Com ayen as thow yode.

Nay, be mey trowt, seyde Roben,
And then y bescro mey hede,
Yeffe y bryng eney pottes ayen,
And eney weyffe well hem chepe.

Than spake Leytell John,
And all hes felowhes heynd,
Master, be well war of the screffe of Notynggam,
For he ys leytell howr frende.

Thorow the helpe of howr ladey,
Felowhes, let me alone;
Heyt war howte, seyde Roben,
To Notynggam well y gon.

Robyn went to Notynggam,
Thes pottes for to sell;
The potter abode with Robens men,
Ther he fered not eylle.*

V. 97. grat. V. 100. yede.

* This stanza is misplaced in the MS. after V. 96.

Tho Roben droffe on hes wey,
So merey ower the londe.
Heres mor and affter ys to saye,
The best ys beheynde.

[THE SECOND FIT.]

When Roben cam to Notynggam,
The soyt yef y scholde saye,
He set op hes horse anon,
And gaffe hem hotys and haye.

Yn the medys of the towne,
Ther he schowed hes war,
Pottys! pottys! he gan crey foll sone,
Haffe hansell for the mar.

Foll effen agenest the screffeys gate,
Schowed he hes chaffar;
Weyffes and wedowes abowt hem drow,
And chepyd fast of hes war.

Yet, Pottys, gret chepe! creyed Robyn,
Y loffe yeffell thes to stonde.
And all that saw hem sell,
Seyde he had be no potter long.

V. 135. say.

The pottys that wer werthe pens feyffe,
He solde tham for pens thre:
Preveley seyde man and weyffe,
Ywnder potter schall never the.

Thos Roben solde foll fast,
Tell he had pottys bot feyffe;
Op he hem toke of his car,
And sende hem to the screffeys weyffe.

Therof sche was foll fayne,
Gereamarsey, sir, than seyde sche,
When ye com to thes contre ayen,
Y schall bey of 'they' pottys, so mot y the.

Ye schall haffe of the best, seyde Roben,
And swar be the treneytè.
Foll corteysley 'she' gan hem call,
Com deyne with the screfe and me.

Godamarsey, seyde Roben,
Yowr bedyng schall be doyn.
A mayden yn the pottys gan ber,
Roben and the screffe weyffe folowed anon.

Whan Roben ynto the hall cam,
The screffe sone he met,
The potter cowed of corteysey,
And sone the screffe he gret.

V. 146. seyde sche s' than. V. 148. the. V. 151. he.

"Loketh what thes potter hayt geffe yow and me!
Feyffe pottys smalle and grete!"
He ys fol wellcom, seyd the screffe,
Let os was, and 'go' to mete.

As they sat at her methe,
With a nobell cher,
Two of the screffes men gan speke
Off a gret wagèr,

Was made the thother daye,
Off a schotyng was god and feyne,
Off forty shillings, the soyt to saye,
Who scholde thes wager wen.

Styll than sat thes prowde potter,
Thos than thowt he,
As y am a trow Cerstyn man,
Thes schotyng well y se.

Whan they had fared of the best,
With bred and ale and weyne,
To the 'bottys they' made them prest,
With bowes and boltys foll feyne.

The screffes men schot foll fast,
As archares that weren godde,
Ther cam non ner ney the marke
Bey halfe a god archares bowe.

V. 161. Loseth. V. 164. to. VV. 169. 170. These two lines are transposed in the MS. V. 179. pottys the. V. 180. bolt yt.

Stell then stod the prowde potter,
Thos than seyde he,
And y had a bow, be the rode,
On schot scholde yow se.

Thow schall haffe a bow, seyde the screffe,
The best that thow well cheys of thre;
Thow semyst a stalward and a stronge,
Asay schall thow be.

The screffe comandyd a yeman that stod hem bey
Affter bowhes to wende;
The best bow that the yeman browthe
Roben set on a stryng.

" Now schall y wet and thow be god,
And polle het op to they ner."
So god me helpe, seyde the prowde pottèr,
Thys ys bot rygzt weke ger.

To a quequer Roben went,
A god bolt owthe he toke,
So ney on to the marke he went,
He fayled not a fothe.

All they schot abowthe agen,
The screffes men and he,
Off the marke he welde not fayle,
He cleffed the preke on thre.

V. 191. senyst.

The screffes men thowt gret schame,
The potter the mastry wan;
The screffe lowe and made god game,
And seyde, Potter, thow art a man;
Thow art worthey to ber a bowe,
Yn what plas that thow 'gang.'

Yn mey cart y haffe a bowe,
Forsoyt, he seyde, and that a godde;
Yn mey cart ys the bow
That 'I had of Robyn Hode.'

Knowest thow Robyn Hode? seyde the screffe,
Potter, y prey the tell thou me.
"A hundred torne y haffe schot with hem,
Under hes tortyll tre."

Y had lever nar a hundred ponde, seyde the screffe,
And swar be the trenitè,
[Y had lever nar a hundred ponde, he seyde,]
That the fals owtelawe stod be me.

And ye well do afftyr mey red, seyde the potter,
And boldeley go with me,
And to morow, or we het bred,
Roben Hode wel we se.

V. 214. goe. V. 218. that Robyng gaffe me.

Y well queyt the, kod the screffe,
And swer be god of meythe.
Schetyng thay left, and hom they went,
Her scoper was redey deythe.

Upon the morow, when het was day,
He boskyd hem forthe to reyde;
The potter hes carte forthe gan ray,
And wolde not [be] leffe beheynde.

He toke leffe of the screffys wyffe,
And thankyd her of all thyng:
" Dam, for mey loffe, and ye well thys wer,
Y geffe yow her a golde ryng."

Gramarsey, seyde the weyffe,
Sir, god eylde het the.
The screffes hart was never so leythe,
The feyr forest to se.

And when he cam ynto the foreyst,
Yonder the leffes grene,
Berdys ther sange on bowhes prest,
Het was gret goy to sene.

Her het ys merey to be, seyde Roben,
For a man that had hawt to spende:
Be mey horne 'we' schall awet
Yeff Roben Hode be 'ner hande.'

V. 232. mey they. V. 251. se. V. 254. he.

Roben set hes horne to hes mowthe,
And blow a blast that was foll god,
That herde hes men that ther stode,
Fer downe yn the wodde.
I her mey master, seyde Leytyll John :
They ran as thay wer wode.

Whan thay to thar master cam,
Leytell John wold not spar :
" Master, how haffe yow far yn Notynggam ?
Haffe yow solde yowr war ?"

" Ye, be mey trowthe, Leytyll John,
Loke thow take no car ;
Y haffe browt the screffe of Notynggam,
For all howr chaffar."

He ys foll wellcom, seyde Lytyll John,
Thes tydyng ys foll godde.
The screffe had lever nar a hundred ponde
[He had never sene Roben Hode].

" Had I west that beforen,
At Notynggam when we wer,
Thow scholde not com yn feyr forest
Of all thes thowsande eyr."

V. 255. her. V. 259. For. V. 265. How haffe.
V. 266. I leyty. V. 274. He had west.

That wot y well, seyde Roben,
  Y thanke god that y be her;
Therfor schall ye leffe yowr horse with hos,
  And all your hother ger.

That fend I godys forbode, kod the screffe,
  So to lese mey godde.
" Hether ye cam on horse foll hey,
  And hom schall ye go on fote;
And gret well they weyffe at home,
  The woman ys foll godde.

Y schall her sende a wheyt palffrey,
  Het hambellet as the weynde;
Ner for the loffe of yowr weyffe,
  Off mor sorow scholde yow seyng."

Thes parted Robyn Hode and the screffe,
  To Notynggam he toke the waye;
Hes weyffe feyr welcomed hem hom,
  And to hem gan sche saye:

Seyr, how haffe yow fared yn grene foreyst?
  Haffe ye browt Roben hom? [bon,
" Dam, the deyell spede hem, bothe bodey and
  Y haffe hade a foll grete skorne.

V. 279. that ye be. V. 284. y. V. 288. The MS. repeats this line after the following: Het ambellet be mey sey.

Of all the god that y haffe lade to grene wod,
He hayt take het fro me,
All bot this feyr palffrey,
That he hayt sende to the."

With that sche toke op a lowde lawhyng,
And swhar be hem that deyed on tre:
" Now haffe yow payed for all the pottys
That Roben gaffe to me.

Now ye be com hom to Notynggam,
Ye schall haffe god ynowe."
Now speke we of Roben Hode,
And of the pottyr onder the grene bowhe.

" Potter, what was they pottys worthe
To Notynggam that y ledde with me?"
They wer worth two nobellys, seyd he,
So mot y treyffe or the;
So cowde y had for tham,
And y had ther be.

Thow schalt hafe ten ponde, seyde Roben,
Of money feyr and fre;
And yever whan thow comest to grene wod,
Wellcom, potter, to me.

V. 311. bowhes. V. 317. be ther.

Thes partyd Robyn, the screffe, and the potter,
Ondernethe the grene wod tre.
God haffe mersey on Roben Hodys solle,
And saffe all god yemanrey!





III.

ROBIN HOOD AND THE BEGGAR.

This poem, a north-country (or, perhaps, Scotish) composition of some antiquity, is given from a modern copy printed at Newcastle, where it was accidentally picked up: no other edition having been ever seen or heard of. The corruptions of the press being equally numerous and minute, some of the most trifling have been corrected without notice. But it may be proper to mention that each line of the printed copy is here thrown into two: a step which, though absolutely necessary from the narrowness of the page, is sufficiently justifyed by the frequent recurrence of the double rime. The division of stanzas was conceived to be a still further improvement.—The original title is, "A pretty dialogue betwixt Robin Hood and a beggar."

A similar story ("Comment un moine se débarasse des voleurs") may be found in Le moyen de parvenir, i. 304 (edit. 1739).

Lyth and listen, gentlemen,
That be of high born blood,
I'll tell you of a brave booting
That befell Robin Hood.

Robin Hood upon a day,
He went forth him alone,
And as he came from Barnsdale
Into fair evening,

He met a beggar on the way,
Who sturdily could gang;
He had a pike-staff in his hand
That was both stark and strang;

A clouted clock about him was,
That held him frae the cold,
The thinnest bit of it, I guess,
Was more than twenty fold.

His meal-poke hang about his neck,
Into a leathern whang,
Well fasten'd to a broad bucle,
That was both stark and 'strang.'

He had three hats upon his head,
Together sticked fast,
He car'd neither for wind nor wet,
In lands where'er he past.

V. 24. wher'e.

Good Robin cast him in the way,
To see what he might be,
If any beggar had monèy,
He thought some part had he.

Tarry, tarry, good Robin says,
Tarry, and speak with me.
He heard him as he heard him not,
And fast on his way can hy.

'Tis be not so, says [good] Robìn,
Nay, thou must tarry still.
By my troth, said the bold beggàr,
Of that I have no will.

It is far to my lodging house,
And it is growing late,
If they have supt e'er I come in
I will look wondrous blate.

Now, by my truth, says good Robìn,
I see well by thy fare,
If thou shares well to thy suppèr,
Of mine thou dost not care,

Who wants my dinner all this day,
And wots not where to ly,
And would I to the tavern go,
I want money to buy.

Sir, you must lend me some monèy
Till we meet again.
The beggar answer'd cankardly,
I have no money to lend:

Thou art a young man as I,
And seems to be as sweer;
If thou fast till thou get from me,
Thou shalt eat none this year.

Now, by my truth, says [good] Robìn,
Since we are asembled so,
If thou hast but a small farthing,
I'll have it e'er thou go.

Come, lay down thy clouted cloak,
And do no longer stand,
And loose the strings of all thy pokes,
I'll ripe them with my hand.

And now to thee I make a vow,
If 'thou' make any din,
I shall see a broad arròw,
Can pierce a beggar's skin.

The beggar smil'd, and answer made,
Far better let me be;
Think not that I will be afraid,
For thy nip crooked tree;

Or that I fear thee any whit,
For thy curn nips of sticks,
I know no use for them so meet
As to be puding-pricks.

Here I defy thee to do me ill,
For all thy boisterous fair,
Thou's get nothing from me but ill,
Would'st thou seek evermair.

Good Robin bent his noble bow,
He was an angery man,
And in it set a broad arròw;
Lo! e'er 'twas drawn a span,

The beggar, with his noble tree,
Reach'd him so round a rout,
That his bow and his broad arròw
In flinders flew about.

Good Robin bound him to his brand,
But that prov'd likewise vain,
The beggar lighted on his hand
With his pike-staff again:

[I] wot he might not draw a sword
For forty days and mair.
Good Robin could not speak a word,
His heart was ne'er so sair.

He could not fight, he could not flee,
He wist not what to do;
The beggar with his noble tree
Laid lusty slaps him to.

He paid good Robin back and side,
And baist him up and down,
And with his pyke-staff laid on loud,
Till he fell in a swoon.

Stand up, man, the beggar said,
'Tis shame to go to rest;
Stay till thou get thy money told,
I think it were the best:

And syne go to the tavern house,
And buy both wine and ale;
Hereat thy friends will crack full crouse,
Thou hast been at the dale.

Good Robin answer'd ne'er a word,
But lay still as a stane;
His cheeks were pale as any clay,
And closed were his een.

The beggar thought him dead but fail,
And boldly bound his way.—
I would ye had been at the dale,
And gotten part of the play.

V. 116. closd. We might read:
And clos'd were [baith] his een.

THE SECOND PART.

Now three of Robin's men, by chance,
  Came walking by the way,
And found their master in a trance,
  On ground where that he lay.

Up have they taken good Robin,
  Making a piteous bear,
Yet saw they no man there at whom
  They might the matter spear.

They looked him all round about,
  But wound on him saw 'nane,'
Yet at his mouth came bocking out
  The blood of a good vain.

Cold water they have gotten syne,
  And cast unto his face;
Then he began to hitch his ear,
  And speak within short space.

Tell us, dear master, said his men,
  How with you stands the case.
Good Robin sigh'd e'er he began
  To tell of his disgrace.

" I have been watchman in this wood
Near hand this twenty year,
Yet I was never so hard bestead
As ye have found me here;

A beggar with a clouted clock,
Of whom I fear'd no ill
Hath with his pyke-staff cla'd my back,
I fear 'twill never be well.

See, where he goes o'er yon hill,
With hat upon his head;
If e'er ye lov'd your master well,
Go now revenge this deed;

And bring him back again to me,
If it lie in your might,
That I may see, before I die,
Him punish'd in my sight:

And if you may not bring him back,
Let him not go loose on;
For to us all it were great shame
If he escape again."

" One of us shall with you remain,
Because you're ill at ease,
The other two shall bring him back,
To use him as you please."

Now, by my truth, says good Robìn,
I true there's enough said;
And he get scouth to wield his tree,
I fear you'll both be paid.

" Be not fear'd, our mastèr,
That we two can be dung
With any bluter base beggàr,
That has nought but a rung.

His staff shall stand him in no stead,
That you shall shortly see,
But back again he shall be led,
And fast bound shall he be,
To see if ye will have him slain,
Or hanged on a tree."

" But cast you sliely in his way,
Before he be aware,
And on his pyke-staff first hands lay,
Ye'll speed the better far."

Now leave we Robin with his man,
Again to play the child,
And learn himself to stand and gang
By halds, for all his eild.

Now pass we to the bold beggàr,
That raked o'er the hill,
Who never mended his pace more,
Then he had done no ill.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

And they have taken another way,
Was nearer by miles three.

They stoutly ran with all their might,
Spared neither dub 'nor' mire,
They started at neither how nor height,
No travel made them tire,

Till they before the beggar wan,
And cast them in his way;
A little wood lay in a glen,
And there they both did stay;

They stood up closely by a tree,
In each side of the gate,
Untill the beggar came them nigh,
That thought of no such late:

And as he was betwixt them past,
They leapt upon him baith;
The one his pyke-staff gripped fast,
They feared for its skaith.

The other he held in his sight
A drawen durk to his breast,
And said, False 'carel,' quit thy staff,
Or I shall be thy priest.

V. 71. The preceding lines of this stanza are wanting in the original.

His pyke-staff they have taken him frae,
And stuck it in the green,
He was full loath to let it gae,
An better might it been.

The beggar was the feardest man
Of any that e'er might be,
To win away no way he can,
Nor help him with his tree.

Nor wist he wherefore he was ta'en,
Nor how many was there;
He thought his life days had been gane,
He grew into dispair.

Grant me my life, the beggar said,
For him that dy'd on the tree,
And hold away that ugly knife,
Or else for fear I'll die.

I griev'd you never in all my life,
Neither by late or air,
You have great sin if you would slay
A silly poor beggàr.

Thou lies, false lown, they said again,
For all that may be sworn;
Thou hast 'near' slain the gentlest man
Of one that e'er was born;

And back again thou shall be led,
And fast bound shalt thou be,
To see if he will have thee slain,
Or hanged on a tree.

The beggar then thought all was wrong,
They were set for his wrack,
He saw nothing appearing then
But ill upon warse back.

Were he out of their hands, he thought,
And had again his tree,
He should not be led back for nought,
With such as he did see.

Then he bethought him on a wile,
If it could take effect,
How he might the young men beguile,
And give them a begeck.

Thus to do them shame for ill
His beastly breast was bent,
He found the wind blew something shrill,
To further his intent.

He said, Brave gentlemen, be good,
And let a poor man be;
When ye have taken a beggar's blood,
It helps you not a flee.

V. 132. gave. begack.

It was but in my own defence,
If he has gotten skaith;
But I will make a recompence
Is better for you baith.

If ye will set me fair and free,
And do me no more dear,
An hundred pounds I will you give,
And much more odd silvèr,

That I have gather'd this many years,
Under this clouted cloak,
And hid up wonder privately,
In bottom of my poke.

The young men to the council yeed,
And let the beggar gae;
They wist full well he had no speed
From them to run away.

They thought they would the money take,
Come after what so may;
And yet they would not take him back,
But in that place him slay.

By that good Robin would not know
That they had gotten coin,
It would content him [well] to show
That there they had him slain.

V. 153. yeen.

They said, False carel, soon have done,
And tell forth thy monèy,
For the ill turn that thou hast done
It's but a simple plee.

And yet we will not have thee back,
Come after what so may,
If thou will do that which thou spak,
And make us present pay.

O then he loosed his clouted clock,
And spread it on the ground,
And thereon lay he many a poke,
Betwixt them and the wind.

He took a great bag from his hals,
It was near full of meal,
Two pecks in it at least there was,
And more, I wot full well.

Upon this cloak he set it down,
The mouth he opened wide,
To turn the same he made him bown,
The young men ready spy'd;

In every hand he took a nook
Of that great leathren 'mail,'
And with a fling the meal he shook
Into their face all hail:

V. 171. spok. V. 177. half. V. 183. bound. V. 186. bag.

Wherewith he blinded them so close,
A stime they could not see;
And then in heart he did rejoice,
And clap'd his lusty tree.

He thought if he had done them wrong,
In mealing of their cloaths,
For to strike off the meal again
With his pyke-staff he goes.

E'er any of them could red their een,
Or a glimmring might see,
Ilke one of them a dozen had,
Well laid on with his tree.

The young men were right swift of foot,
And boldly bound away,
The beggar could them no more hit,
For all the haste he may.

What's all this haste? the beggar said,
May not you tarry still,
Untill your money be received?
I'll pay you with good will.

The shaking of my pokes, I fear,
Hath blown into your een;
But I have a good pyke-staff here
Can ripe them out full clean.

V. 194. cloath. V. 206. thou.

The young men answered never a word,
They were dum as a stane;
In the thick wood the beggar fled,
E'er they riped their een:

And syne the night became so late,
To seek him was in vain:
But judge ye if they looked blate
When they cam home again.

Good Robin speer'd how they had sped.
They answered him, Full ill.
That can not be, good Robin says,
Ye have been at the mill.

The mill it is a meat-rife part,
They may lick what they please,
Most like ye have been at the art,
Who would look at your 'claiths.'

They hang'd their heads, they drooped down,
A word they could not speak.
Robin said, Because I fell a-sound,
I think ye'll do the like.

Tell on the matter, less or more,
And tell me what and how
Ye have done with the bold beggàr
I sent you for right now.

V. 221. speed. V. 228. cloaths.

And when they told him to an end,
As i have said before,
How that the beggar did them blind,
What 'mister' presses more?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

And how in the thick woods he fled,
E'er they a stime could see;

And how they scarcely could win home,
Their bones were baste so sore;
Good Robin cry'd, Fy! out! for shame!
We're sham'd for evermore.

Altho good Robin would full fain
Of his wrath revenged be,
He smil'd to see his merry young men
Had gotten a taste of the tree.





IV.

ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE,

is reprinted from the " Reliques of ancient English poetry," published by Dr. Percy, (Vol. I. p. 81.) who there gives it from his " folio MS." as " never before printed, and ' carrying ' marks of much greater antiquity than any of the common popular songs on this subject."

As for Guy of Gisborne, the only further memorial which has occured concerning him, is in an old satyrical piece by William Dunbar, a celebrated Scotish poet, of the 15th century, on one " Schir Thomas Nory," (MS. Maitland, p. 3. MSS. More, Ll. 5. 10.) where he is named along with our hero, Adam Bell, and other worthies, it is conjectured, of a similar stamp, but whose merits have not, less fortunately, come to the knowlege of posterity.

" Was nevir WEILD ROBEINE under bewch,
Nor yitt Roger of Clekkinslewch,
So bauld a bairne as he ;
GY OF GYSBURNE, na Allane Bell,
Na Simones sones of Quhynsell,
Off thocht war nevir so slie."

Gisborne is a market-town in the west riding of the county of York, on the borders of Lancashire.

In the fourth edition of the publication above referred to, which appeared in July 1795, it is acknowleged, that " Some liberties were, by the editor, taken with this ballad, which, in this edition hath been brought nearer to the folio MS." The new readings have therefore been introduced into the present text.

WHAN shaws beene sheene, and shraddes full
And leaves both large and longe, [fayre,
Itt's merrye walkyng in the fayre forrèst
To heare the small birdes songe.

The woodweele sang, and wold not cease,
Sitting upon the spraye,
Soe lowde, he wakened Robin Hood,
In the greenwood where he lay.

Now, by my faye, sayd jollye Robìn,
A sweaven I had this night;
I dreamt me of tow wighty yemèn,
That fast with me can fight.

V. 1. " It should perhaps be swards: i. e. the surface of the ground: viz. ' when the fields are in their beauty.' " PERCY. Rather, shrobbes (shrubs). The plural of sward was never used by any writer whatever. For shaws the MS. has shales.

Methought they did me beate and binde,
And tooke my bowe me froe;
Iff I be Robin alive in this lande,
Ile be wroken on them towe.

Sweavens are swift, master, quoth John,
As the wind that blowes ore a hill;
For iff itt be never so loude this night,
To-morrow it may be still.

"Buske yee, bowne yee, my merry men all,
And John shall goe with mee,
For Ile goe seeke yond wighty yeomèn,
In greenwood where they bee."

Then they cast on theyr gownes of grene,
And tooke theyr bowes each one;
And they away to the greene forrèst
A shooting forth are gone;

Untill they came to the merry greenwood,
Where they had gladdest to bee,
There they were ware of a wight yeomàn,
His body leaned to a tree.

A sword and a dagger he wore by his side,
Of manye a man the bane;
And he was clad in his capull hyde
Topp and tayll and mayne.

Stand you still, master, quoth Little John,
Under this tree so grene,
And I will go to yond wight yeomàn,
To know what he doth meane.

" Ah! John, by me thou settest noe store,
And that I farley finde:
How offt send I my men before,
And tarry my selfe behinde?

It is no cunning a knave to ken,
And a man but heare him speake;
And it were not for bursting of my bowe,
John, I thy head wold breake."

As often wordes they breeden bale,
So they parted Robin and John:
And John is gone to Barnesdale;
The gates he knoweth eche one.

But when he came to Barnesdale,
Great heavinesse there he hadd,
For he found tow of his own fellòwes,
Were slaine both in a slade.

And Scarlette he was flying a-foote
Fast over stocke and stone,
For the proud sheriffe with seven score men
Fast after him is gone.

One shoote now I will shoote, quoth John,
With Christ his might and mayne;
Ile make yond sheriffe that flyes soe fast,
To stopp he shall be fayne.

Then John bent up his long bende-bowe,
And fetteled him to shoote:
The bow was made of tender boughe,
And fell downe at his foote.

"Woe worth, woe worth thee, wicked wood,
That ever thou grew on a tree!
For now this day thou art my bale,
My boote when thou shold bee."

His shoote it was but loosely shott,
Yet flewe not the arrowe in vaine,
For itt mett one of the sheriffes men,
Good William a Trent was slaine.

It had bene better of William a Trent
To have bene abed with sorrowe,
Than to be that day in the greenwood slade
To meet with Little Johns arrowe.

But as it is said, when men be mett
Fyve can doe more than three,
The sheriffe hath taken Little John,
And bound him fast to a tree.

" Thou shalt be drawen by dale and downe,
And hanged hye on a hill."
But thou mayst fayle of thy purpose, quoth John,
If it be Christ his will.

Lett us leave talking of Little John,
And thinke of Robin Hood,
How he is gone to the wight yeomàn,
Where under the leaves he stood.

Good morrowe, good fellowe, sayd Robin so fayre,
Good morrowe, good fellow, quo' he:
Methinkes by this bowe thou beares in thy hande,
A good archere thou sholdst bee.

I am wilfulle of my waye, quo' the yemàn,
And of my morning tyde.
Ile lead thee through the wood, sayd Robìn;
Good fellow, Ile be thy guide.

I seeke an outlawe, the straunger sayd,
Men call him Robin Hood;
Rather Ild meet with that proud outlàwe
Than fortye pound soe good.

V. 94. Dr. Percy, by the marks he has bestowed on this line, seems to consider it as the yeomans reply: but it seems rather a repetition of Robins complimentary address.

" Now come with me, thou wighty yemàn
And Robin thou soone shalt see:
But first let us some pastime find
Under the greenwood tree.

First let us some masterye make
Among the woods so even,
We may chance to meet with Robin Hood
Here at some unsett steven."

They cutt them down two summer shroggs,
That grew both under a breere,
And sett them threescore rood in twaine,
To shoote the prickes y-fere.

Leade on, good fellowe, quoth Robin Hood,
Leade on, I do bidd thee.
Nay, by my faith, good fellowe, hee sayd,
My leader thou shalt bee.

The first time Robin shot at the pricke,
He mist but an inch it fro:
The yeoman he was an archer good,
But he cold never shoote soe.

The second shoote had the wightye yemàn,
He shot within the garlànd:
But Robin he shott far better than hee,
For he clave the good pricke-wande.

A blessing upon thy heart, he sayd;
Good fellowe, thy shooting is goode;
For an thy hart be as good as thy hand,
Thou wert better than Robin Hoode.

Now tell me thy name, good fellowe, sayd he,
Under the leaves of lyne.
Nay, by my faith, quoth bold Robin,
Till thou have told me thine.

I dwell by dale and downe, quoth hee,
And Robin to take Ime sworne;
And when I am called by my right name
I am Guy of good Gisborne.

My dwelling is in this wood, sayes Robin,
By thee I set right nought:
I am Robin Hood of Barnésdale,
Whom thou so long hast sought.

He that had neyther beene kythe nor kin,
Might have seen a full fayre fight,
To see how together these yeomen went
With blades both browne and bright.

To see how these yeomen together they fought
Two howres of a summers day:
Yett neither Robin Hood nor sir Guy
Them fettled to flye away.

Robin was reachles on a roote
And stumbled at that tyde;
And Guy was quicke and nimble withall,
And hitt him ore the left syde.

Ah, deere ladye, sayd Robin Hood tho,
That art both mother and may,
I think it was never mans destinye
To dye before his day.

Robin thought on our ladye deere,
And soone leapt up againe,
And strait he came with a[n] awkwarde stroke
And he sir Guy hath slayne.

He took sir Guys head by the hayre,
And sticked itt upon his bowes end:
"Thou hast beene a traytor all thy life,
Which thing must have an end."

V. 158. both.] This in the three former editions of the Reliques is, improperly, altered to but.

V. 163. awkwarde.] So, according to Percy, reads his MS. He has altered it to 'backward.'

V. 164. The title of SIR, Dr. Percy says, was not formerly peculiar to knights; it was given to priests, and sometimes to very inferior personages. If the text did not seem to be in favour of the latter part of this assertion, one might reasonably question its truth. Another instance, at least, it is believed, admitting this to be one, which is by no means certain, cannot be produced.

Robin pulled forth an Irish knife,
And nicked sir Guy in the face,
That he was never on woman born
Cold tell whose head it was.

Sayes, Lye there, lye there, now sir Guye,
And with me be not wrothe;
Iff thou have had the worst strokes at my hand,
Thou shalt have the better clothe.

Robin did off his gown of greene,
And on sir Guy did it throwe,
And he put on that capull hyde,
That cladd him topp to toe.

" The bowe, the arrowes, and little horne,
Now with me I will beare;
For I will away to Barnésdale,
To see how my men doe fare."

Robin Hood sett Guyes horne to his mouth,
And a loude blast in it did blow:
That beheard the sheriffe of Nottingham,
As he leaned under a lowe.

Hearken, hearken, sayd the sheriffe,
I heare nowe tydings good,
For yonder I heare sir Guyes horne blow,
And he hath slaine Robin Hoode.

Yonder I heare sir Guyes horne blowe,
Itt blowes soe well in tyde,
And yonder comes that wightye yeomàn,
Cladd in his capull hyde.

Come hyther, come hyther, thou good sir Guy,
Aske what thou wilt of mee.
O I will none of thy gold, sayd Robin,
Nor I will none of thy fee:

But now I have slaine the master, he sayes,
Let me goe strike the knave;
For this is all the meede I aske;
Nor no other will I have.

Thou art a madman, sayd the sheriffe,
Thou sholdst have had a knightes fee:
But seeing thy asking hath beene soe bad,
Well granted it shal bee.

When Little John heard his master speake,
Well knewe he it was his steven:
Now shall I be looset, quoth Little John,
With Christ his might in heaven.

Fast Robin hee hyed him to Little John,
He thought to loose him belive;
The sheriffe and all his companye
Fast after him did drive.

Stand abacke, stand abacke, sayd Robìn;
Why draw you mee so neere?
It was never the use in our countryè,
Ones shrift another shold heere.

But Robin pulled forth an Irish knife,
And losed John hand and foote,
And gave him sir Guyes bow into his hand,
And bade it be his boote.

Then John he took Guyes bow in his hand,
His boltes and arrowes eche one:
When the sheriffe saw Little John bend his bow,
He fettled him to be gone.

Towards his house in Nottingham towne,
He fled full fast away;
And soe did all the companye:
Not one behind wold stay.

But he cold neither runne soe fast,
Nor away soe fast cold ryde,
But Little John with an arrowe soe broad,
He shott him into the 'backe'-syde.

V. 236. Sic PC. quere the MS.



V.

A TRUE TALE OF ROBIN HOOD:

OR,

A briefe touch of the life and death of that renowned outlaw Robert earl of Huntingdon, vulgarly called Robin Hood, who lived and dyed in A. D. 1198.* being the 9th year of king Richard the first, commonly called Richard Cœur de Lyon.

Carefully collected out of the truest writers of our English Chronicles: and published for the satisfaction of those who desire truth from falshood.

BY MARTIN PARKER.

* An absurd mistake, scarcely worth notice in this place, and which the reader will have it in his own power to correct.

This poem, given from an edition in black letter, printed for I. Clarke, W. Thackeray, and T. Passinger, 1686, remaining in the curious library left by Anthony à Wood, appears to have been first entered on the hall-book of the stationers company, the 29th of February, 1631.

Martin Parker was a great writer of ballads, several of which, with is initials subjoined, are still extant in the Pepysian and other collections. (See "Ancient songs," 1829, ii. p. 263.) Dr. Percy mentions a little miscellany intitled, "The garland of withered roses, by Martin Parker, 1656." The editor has, likewise, seen "The nightingale warbling forth her own disaster, or the rape of Philomela: newly written in English verse by Martin Parker, 1632;" and, on the 24th. of November, 1640, Mr. Oulton enters, at Stationers hall, "a book called The true story of Guy earle of Warwicke, in prose, by Martyn Parker."

At the end of this poem the author adds "The epitaph which the prioress of the monastry of Kirkslay in Yorkshire set over Robin Hood, which," he says, "(as is before mentioned) was to be read within these hundred years, though in old broken English, much to the same sence and meaning." He gives it thus:

"Decembris quarto die, 1198. anno regni Richardi primi 9.

"Robert earl of Huntington
"Lies under this little stone,
"No archer was like him so good;
"His wildness named him Robin Hood;
"Full thirteen years, and something more,
"These northern parts he vexed sore;
"Such outlaws as he and his men
"May England never know again."

"Some other superstitious words," he adds, "were in, which I," says he, "thought fit to leave out." Now, under this precise

gentlemans favour, one would be glad to know what these same "superstitious words" were; there not being anything of the kind in Dr. Gales copy, which seems to be the original, and which is shorter by two lines than the above. Thirteen should be thirty.

Both gentlemen, and yeomen bold,
Or whatsoever you are,
To have a stately story told
Attention now prepare:

It is a tale of Robin Hood,
Which i to you will tell;
Which, being rightly understood,
I know will please you well.

This Robin (so much talked on)
Was once a man of fame,
Instiled earl of Huntington,
Lord Robin Hood by name.

In courtship and magnificence
His carriage won him praise,
And greater favour with his prince
Than any in 'those' days.

In bounteous liberality
He too much did excell,
And loved men of quality
More than exceeding well.

V. 16. our.

His great revenues all he sold
For wine and costly chear;
He kept three hundred bow-men bold,
He shooting lov'd so dear.

No archer living in his time
With him might well compare;
He practis'd all his youthful prime
That exercise most rare.

At last, by his profuse expence,
He had consum'd his wealth;
And, being outlaw'd by his prince,
In woods he liv'd by stealth.

The abbot of Saint Maries rich,
To whom he mony ought,
His hatred to the earl was such
That he his downfal wrought.

So being outlaw'd (as 'tis told)
He with a crew went forth
Of lusty cutters stout and bold,
And robbed in the North.

Among the rest one Little John,
A yeoman bold and free,
Who could (if it stood him upon)
With ease encounter three.

One hundred men in all he got,
With whom (the story says)
Three hundred common men durst not
Hold combat any waies.

They Yorkshire woods frequented much,
And Lancashire also,
Wherein their practises were such
That they wrought muckle woe.

None rich durst travel to and fro,
Though ne'r so strongly arm'd,
But by these thieves (so strong in show)
They still were rob'd and harm'd.

His chiefest spight to th' clergy was,
That liv'd in monstrous pride:
No one of them he would let pass
Along the highway side,

But first they must to dinner go,
And afterwards to shrift:
Full many a one he served so,
Thus while he liv'd by theft.

No monks nor fryers he would let go,
Without paying their fees:
If they thought much to be used so,
Their stones he made them lese.

For such as they the country fill'd
With bastards in those days:
Which to prevent, these sparks did geld
All that came in their ways.*

But Robin Hood so gentle was,
And bore so brave a mind,
If any in distress did pass,
To them he was so kind,

That he would give and lend to them,
To help them in their need;
This made all poor men pray for him,
And wish he well might speed.

The widow and the fatherless
He would send means unto;
And those whom famine did oppress
Found him a friendly foe.

* There is no authority for imputing this execrable practice to our hero or his companions, in any one single instance. If, however, the lex talionis were at all justifiable, they certainly had sufficient provocation to exercise it—not, indeed, upon the clergy, in particular, but upon the king, his ministers, judges, and nobles; "The ancient punishment for killing the king's deer," says Dr. Percy, "was loss of eyes and castration: a punishment far worse than death!"

Nor would he do a woman wrong,
But see her safe convey'd:
He would protect with power strong
All those who crav'd his aid.

The abbot of Saint Maries then,
Who him undid before,
Was riding with two hundred men,
And gold and silver store:

But Robin Hood upon him set,
With his couragious sparks,
And all the coyn perforce did get,
Which was twelve thousand marks.

He bound the abbot to a tree,
And would not let him pass,
Before that to his men and he
His lordship had said mass:

Which being done, upon his horse
He set him fast astride,
And with his face towàrds his a—
He forced him to ride.

His men were forced to be his guide,
For he rode backward home:
The abbot, being thus villify'd,
Did sorely chafe and fume.

Thus Robin Hood did vindicate
His former wrongs receiv'd:
For 'twas this covetous prelàte
That him of land bereav'd.

The abbot he rode to the king,
With all the haste he could;
And to his grace he every thing
Exactly did unfold:

And said that if no course were ta'n,
By force or stratagem,
To take this rebel and his train,
No man should pass for them.

The king protested by and by
Unto the abbot then,
That Robin Hood with speed should dye,
With all his merry men.

But e're the king did any send,
He did another feat,
Which did his grace much more offend,
The fact indeed was great:

For in a short time after that
The kings receivers went
Towards London with the coyn they got,
For's highness northern rent:

Bold Robin Hood and Little John,
With the rest of their train,
Not dreading law, set them upon,
And did their gold obtain.

The king much moved at the same,
And the abbots talk also,
In this his anger did proclaim,
And sent word to and fro,

That whosoever alive or dead
Could bring bold Robin Hood,
Should have one thousand marks well paid
In gold and silver good.

This promise of the king did make
Full many yeomen bold
Attempt stout Robin Hood to take
With all the force they could.

But still when any came to him
Within the gay green wood,
He entertainment gave to them
With venison fat and good;

And shew'd to them such martial sport
With his long bow and arrow,
That they of him did give report,
How that it was great sorow

That such a worthy man as he
  Should thus be put to shift,
Being a late lord of high degree,
  Of living quite bereft.

The king to take him more and more
  Sent men of mickle might;
But he and his still beat them sore,
  And conquered them in fight:

Or else with love and courtesie,
  To him he won their hearts.
Thus still he liv'd by robbery
  Throughout the northern parts;

And all the country stood in dread
  Of Robin Hood and's men:
For stouter lads ne'r liv'd by bread
  In those days, nor since then.

The abbot, which before i nam'd,
  Sought all the means he could
To have by force this rebel ta'n,
  And his adherents bold.

Therefore he arm'd five hundred men,
  With furniture compleat;
But the outlaws slew half of them,
  And made the rest retreat,

The long bow and the arrow keen
They were so us'd unto
That still he kept the forrest green
In spight o' th' proudest foe.

Twelve of the abbots men he took,
Who came to have him ta'n,
When all the rest the field forsook,
These he did entertain

With banqueting and merriment,
And, having us'd them well,
He to their lord them safely sent,
And will'd them him to tell,

That if he would be pleas'd at last
To beg of our good king,
That he might pardon what was past,
And him to favour bring,

He would surrender back again
The mony which before
Was taken by him 'and his' men
From him and many more.

Poor men might safely pass by him,
And some that way would chuse,
For well they knew that to help them
He evermore did use.

But where he knew a miser rich
That did the poor oppress,
To feel his coyn his hands did itch,
He'd have it, more or less:

And sometimes, when the high-way fail'd,
Then he his courage rouzes,
He and his men have oft assaild
Such rich men in their houses:

So that, through dread of Robin then,
And his adventurous crew,
The misers kept great store of men,
Which else maintain'd but few.

King Richard, of that name the first,
Sirnamed Cœur de Lyon,
Went to defeat the Pagans curst,
Who kept the coasts of Sion.

The bishop of Ely, chancellor,
Was left a vice-roy here,
Who, like a potent emperor,
Did proudly domineer.

Our chronicles of him report,
That commonly he rode
With a thousand horse from court to court,
Where he would make abode.

He, riding down towards the north,
With his aforesaid train,
Robin and his men did issue forth,
Them all to entertain;

And with the gallant gray-goose wing
They shew'd to them such play
That made their horses kick and fling,
And down their riders lay.

Full glad and fain the bishop was,
For all his thousand men,
To seek what means he could to pass
From out of Robins ken.

Two hundred of his men were kill'd,
And fourscore horses good,
Thirty, who did as captives yield,
Were carried to the green wood;

Which afterwards were ransomed,
For twenty marks a man:
The rest set spurs to horse and fled
To th' town of Warrington.

The bishop, sore inraged, then
Did, in king Richards name,
Muster up a power of northern men,
These outlaws bold to tame.

But Robin with his courtesie
So won the meaner sort,
That they were loath on him to try
What rigour did import.

So that bold Robin and his train
Did live unhurt of them,
Until king Richard came again
From fair Jerusalem:

And then the talk of Robin Hood
His royal ears did fill;
His grace admir'd that i' th' green wood
He was continued still.

So that the country far and near
Did give him great applause;
For none of them need stand in fear,
But such as broke the laws.

He wished well unto the king,
And prayed still for his health,
And never practis'd any thing
Against the common-wealth.

Only, because he was undone
By th' cruel clergy then,
All means that he could think upon
To vex such kind of men,

He enterpriz'd with hateful spleen;
For which he was to blame,
For fault of some to wreak his teen
On all that by him came.

With wealth that he by roguery got
Eight alms-houses he built,
Thinking thereby to purge the blot
Of blood which he had spilt.

Such was their blind devotion then,
Depending on their works;
Which if 'twere true, we Christian men
Inferiour were to Turks.

But, to speak true of Robin Hood,
And wrong him not a jot,
He never would shed any mans blood
That him invaded not.

Nor would he injure husbandmen,
That toil at cart and plough;
For well he knew wer't not for them
To live no man knew how.

The king in person, with some lords,
To Nottingham did ride,
To try what strength and skill affords
To crush this outlaws pride.

And, as he once before had done,
He did again proclaim,
That whosoever would take upon
To bring to Nottingham,

Or any place within the land,
Rebellious Robin Hood,
Should be preferr'd in place to stand
With those of noble blood.

When Robin Hood heard of the same,
Within a little space,
Into the town of Nottingham
A letter to his grace

He shot upon an arrow head,
One evening cunningly;
Which was brought to the king, and read
Before his majesty.

The tenour of this letter was
That Robin would submit,
And be true liegeman to his grace
In any thing that's fit,

So that his highness would forgive
Him and his merry men all;
If not, he must i' th' green wood live,
And take what chance did fall.

The king would feign have pardoned him,
But that some lords did say,
This president will much condemn
Your grace another day.

While that the king and lords did stay
Debating on this thing,
Some of these outlaws fled away
Unto the Scottish king.

For they suppos'd, if he were ta'n
Or to the king did yield,
By th' commons all the rest of 's train
Full quickly would be quell'd.

Of more than full an hundred men,
But forty tarried still,
Who were resolv'd to stick to him
Let Fortune work her will.

If none had fled, all for his sake
Had got their pardon free;
The king to favour meant to take
His merry men and he.

But e're the pardon to him came
This famous archer dy'd:
His death and manner of the same
I'le presently describe.

For, being vext to think upon
His followers revolt,
In melancholy passiòn
He did recount his fault.

Perfidious traytors! said he then,
In all your dangers past
Have i you guarded as my men,
To leave me thus at last!

This sad perplexity did cause
A feaver, as some say,
Which him unto confusion draws,
Though by a stranger way.

This deadly danger to prevent,
He hie'd him with all speed
Unto a nunnery, with intent
For his healths-sake to bleed.

A faithless fryer did pretend
In love to let him blood,
But he by falshood wrought the end
Of famous Robin Hood.

The fryer, as some say, did this
To vindicate the wrong
Which to the clergy he and his
Had done by power strong.

Thus dyed he by treachery,
That could not die by force:
Had he liv'd longer, certainly
King Richard, in remorse,

Had unto favour him receiv'd,
'His' brave men elevated:
'Tis pitty he was of life bereav'd
By one which he so hated.

A treacherous leach this fryer was,
To let him bleed to death;
And Robin was, methinks, an ass
To trust him with his breath.

His corps the prioress of the place,
The next day that he dy'd,
Caused to be buried, in mean case,
Close by the high-way side.

And over him she caused a stone
To be fixt on the ground,
An epitaph was set thereon,
Wherein his name was found;

The date o' th' year and day also,
She made to be set there:
That all, who by the way did go,
Might see it plain appear.

That such a man as Robin Hood
Was buried in that place;
And how he lived in the green wood
And robbed for a space.

It seems that though the clergy he
Had put to mickle woe,
He should not quite forgotten be,
Although he was their foe.

This woman, though she did him hate,
Yet loved his memory;
And thought it wondrous pitty that
His fame should with him dye.

This epitaph, as records tell,
Within this hundred years,
By many was discerned well,
But time all things out-wears.

His followers, when he was dead,
Were some repriev'd to grace;
The rest to foreign countries fled,
And left their native place.

Although his funeral was but mean,
This woman had in mind,
Least his fame should be buried clean
From those that came behind.

For certainly, before nor since,
No man e're understood,
Under the reign of any prince,
Of one like Robin Hood.

Full thirteen years, and something more,
These outlaws lived thus;
Feared of the rich, loved of the poor:
A thing most marvellous.

A thing impossible to us
This story seems to be;
None dares be now so venturous,
But times are chang'd we see.

We that live in these later days
Of civil government,
If need be, have an hundred ways
Such outlaws to prevent.

In those days men more barbarous were,
And lived less in awe;
Now (god be thanked) people fear
More to offend the law.

No waring guns were then in use,
They dreamt of no such thing;
Our Englishmen in fight did use
The gallant gray-goose wing;

In which activity these men,
Through practise, were so good,
That in those days none equal'd them,
Especially Robin Hood.

So that, it seems, keeping in caves,
In woods and forests thick,
They'd beat a multitude with staves,
Their arrows did so prick:

And none durst neer unto them come,
Unless in courtesie;
All such he bravely would send home
With mirth and jollity:

Which courtesie won him such love,
As i before have told,
'Twas the chief cause that he did prove
More prosperous than he could.

Let us be thankful for these times
Of plenty, truth and peace;
And leave our great and horrid crimes,
Least they cause this to cease.

I know there's many feigned tales
Of Robin Hood and 's crew;
But chronicles, which seldome fails,
Reports this to be true.

V. 460. i. e. *than he could otherwise have been.*

Let none then think this is a lye,
For, if 'twere put to th' worst,
They may the truth of all descry
I' th' reign of Richard the first.

If any reader please to try,
As i direction show,
The truth of this brave history,
He'l find it true I know.

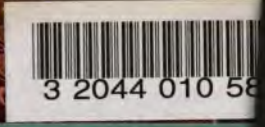
And i shall think my labour well
Bestow'd to purpose good,
When't shall be said that i did tell
True tales of Robin Hood.



THE END OF VOLUME I.

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